

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
98TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]



Salt Lake City, Utah ::: August 16-21, 1997

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NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS; PROCEEDINGS
PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS

The proceedings of the national encampments of the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of World War I of the United States, Incorporated, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), respectively, shall be printed annually, with accompanying illustrations, as separate House documents of the session of the Congress to which they may be submitted.

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

December, 1997

Honorable Newt Gingrich,
The Speaker U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In conformance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 17-21, 1997, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,

LARRY W. RIVERS
Adjutant General

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COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

(Including societies that amalgamated to form Veterans of Foreign Wars)

The Veterans of Foreign Service and the Army of the Philippines amalgamated at Denver, CO, August 1913, forming the Veterans of Foreign Wars as it is today. However, the birth of the order dates from September 29, 1899, when the first national officers were elected and the eligibility clause adopted. The original chapter was granted October 11, 1899.

* indicates deceased

American Veterans of Foreign Service

1899-1900	James C. Putnam*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1900-1901	Maj. Will S. White*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1901-1902	Maj. Will S. White*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1902-1903	James Romanis*	Elected at Washington Courthouse, Ohio.
1903-1904	James Romanis*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1904-1905	James Romanis*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1905-1906	George Metzger*	Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1906-1907	Charles H. Devereaux*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1907-1908	David T. Nevin*	Elected at James Exposition Grounds, Virginia.
1908-1909	J. Alfred Judge*	Elected at Lebanon, Pennsylvania.
1909-1910	J. Alfred Judge*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Jersey City, New Jersey.
1911-1912	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1912-1913	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

American Veterans of Foreign Service (Eastern Branch)

1903-1904	Capt. Robert S. Hansburg *	Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1904-1905	H.O. Kelly *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

(The above two organizations amalgamated September 1905, at Altoona, Pennsylvania.)

Army of the Philippines

1900-1901	Gen. Francis V. Greene *	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1901-1902	Gen. Irving Hale *	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1902-1903	Gen. Irvin Hale *	Elected at Council Bluffs, Iowa.
1903-1904	Gen. Charles King *	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1904-1905	Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf *	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1905-1906	Col. Alfred S. Frost *	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1906-1907	Gen. Arthur MacArthur *	Elected at Des Moines, Iowa.
1907-1908	Capt. H.A. Crow *	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1908-1909	Maj. P.J.H. Farrell *	Elected at Galesburg, Illinois.
1909-1910	Col. Charles L. Jewett *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	A.H. Anderson *	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1911-1912	F. Warner Karling *	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1912-1913	F. Warner Karling *	Elected at Lincoln, Nebraska.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

1913-1914	Rice W. Means*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1914-1915	Thomas Crago *	Elected at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
1915-1916	Gus Hartung*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1916-1917	Albert Rabin*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1917-1918	William Ralston*	Elected at New York, New York.
1918-1919	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1919-1920	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1920-1921	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Washington, D.C.
1921-1922	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1922-1923	Tillinghast Huston*	Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1923-1924	Gen. Lloyd M. Brett*	Elected at Norfolk, Virginia.
1924-1925	John H. Dunn*	Elected at Atlantic City, New Jersey.
1925-1926	Fred Stover*	Elected at Tulsa, Oklahoma.
1926-1927	Theodore Stitt*	Elected at El Paso, Texas.
1927-1928	Frank T. Strayer*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1928-1929	Eugene P. Carver*	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1929-1930	Kezekiah N. Duff*	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1930-1931	Paul C. Wolman*	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1931-1932	Darold D. DeCoe*	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1932-1933	Adm. Robert E. Coontz*	Elected at Sacramento, California.
1933-1934	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1934-1935	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1935-1936	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1936-1937	Bernard W. Kearny*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1937-1938	Scott P. Squyres*	Elected at Buffalo, New York.
1938-1939	Eugene I. Van Antwerp*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1939-1940	Otis N. Brown*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1940-1941	Joseph C. Menendez*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1941-1942	Max Singer*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1942-1943	Robert T. Merrill	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1943-1944	Carl S. Schoeninger*	Elected at New York, New York.
1944-1945	Jean A. Brunner*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1945-1946	Joseph M. Stack*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1946-1947	Louis E. Starr*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1947-1948	Ray H. Brannaman*	Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1948-1949	Lyall T. Beggs *	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1949-1950	Clyde A. Lewis	Elected at Miami, Florida.
1950-1951	Charles C. Ralls*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1951-1952	Frank C. Hilton	Elected at New York, New York.
1952-1953	James W. Cothran*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1953-1954	Wayne E. Richards*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1954-1955	Merton B. Tice*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1955-1956	Timothy J. Murphy*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1956-1957	Cooper T. Holt	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1957-1958	Richard L. Roudebush*	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1958-1959	John W. Mahan	Elected at New York, New York.
1959-1960	Louis G. Feldmann*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1960-1961	T.C. Connell	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1961-1962	Robert E. Hansen	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.

1962-1963	Byron B. Gentry*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1963-1964	Joseph J Lombardo*	Elected at Seattle, Washinton.
1964-1965	John A Jenkins*	Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1965-1966	Andy Borg*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1966-1967	Leslie M. Fry*	Elected at New York, New York.
1967-1968	Joseph A. Scerra	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1968-1969	Richard W. Homan	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1969-1970	Raymond A. Gallagher . . .	Elected at Philidelphia, Pennsylvania.
1970-1971	Herbert R. Rainwater*	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1971-1972	Joseph L. Vicites*	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1972-1973	Patrick E. Carr	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1973-1974	Ray R. Soden	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1974-1975	John J. Stang	El;ected at Chicago, Illinois.
1975-1976	Thomas C. Walker	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1976-1977	R.D. Smith Jr.	Elected at New York, New York.
1977-1978	Dr. John Wasyluk	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1978-1979	Eric Sandstrom	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1979-1980	Howard E. Vander Clute Jr. .	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1980-1981	T.C. Selman*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock	Succeeded T.C. Selman, Oct. 21, 1980.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock	Elected at Philidelphia, Pennsylvania.
1982-1983	James R. Currieo	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1983-1984	Clifford G. Olson Jr.	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1984-1985	Billy Ray Cameron	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1985-1986	John S. Staum	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1986-1987	Norman G. Staab	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1987-1988	Earl L. Stock*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1988-1989	Larry W. Rivers	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1989-1990	Walter G. Hogan	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1990-1991	James L. Kimery	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1991-1992	Robert E. Wallace	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1992-1993	John M. Carney	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1993-1994	George R. Cramer	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1994-1995	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1995-1996	Paul A. Spera	Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
1996-1997	James E. Nier	Elected Louisville, Kentucky.

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1996-97

Commander-in-Chief	James E. Nier
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John E. Moon
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Thomas A. Pouliot
Adjutant General	Larry W. Rivers
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	Leonard R. Herrst
Surgeon General	Robert W. Reif
National Chaplain	William J. Bleiler
National Chief of Staff	Bill E. Lark
Inspector General	Charles R. Stephens
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Dir., Washington Office	Kenneth A. Steadman
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration	John J. Senk, Jr.
Assistant Adjutant General, Programs	W. Benny Bachand
Assistant Adjutant General, Marketing	Ronald G. Browning
Assistant Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Director, Administrative Services	Lawrence LeFebvre
Director, Americanism & Community Activities	Michael J. Gormalley
Director, Emblem & Supply Department	M. L. "Bud" Cale
Director, Finance and Human Resources	Robert B. Greene
Director, Insurance Programs	Robert Crow
Director, Membership	Thomas L. Kissell
Director, Membership Reporting/State Coordinator	Gary Housknecht
Director, National Convention	Joseph D. Ross
Director, Post Services & Buddy Poppy	James R. Rowoldt
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director, Public Affairs	Steve Van Buskirk
Director, VFW Foundation	Robbie Fazen Marchant
Director, VFW Properties	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Voice of Democracy, Youth Activities & Safety	Gordon R. Thorson
National Service Officer & Director, National Veterans Service	Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
Director, National Legislative Service	James N. Magill
Director, Political Action Committee	M. Kelly Goddard
Director, Public Affairs, Washington Office	William G. Smith
Director, Veterans Employment	Sidney Daniels
Administrative Assistant, Kansas City	Russell R. Cutright
Administrative Assistant, Washington Office	Edward L. "Leo" Andrew

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS, 1996-97

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH, VT)	Arthur J. Roy
DISTRICT 2	(MA, CT)	William J. Madera
DISTRICT 3	(MD, RI)	Armondo C. Azzinaro
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	Bruce A. Withers
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	John L. Dahman
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Scottie E. King
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	Roy C. Womble
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Oliver W. Dial
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	George M. Pullie
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Leslie F. Thone
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	Bernard J. Boyle
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	William F. Cerny, Jr.
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Jack L. Armagost
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	Earl E. Chase
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	James H. Ferguson
DISTRICT 16	(CE, PAC, AK, HI)	Dannie Cooper
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Gary L. Clark
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	J. Hollis Smith
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DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Russell R. Rieke, Sr.
DISTRICT C	(New York)	Ralph U. DeMarco
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	George W. Marks
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	Gordon W. Kirk
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	Wayne A. Buck
DISTRICT G	(California)	Raymond C. Sisk
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	Ferrell E. Warden
DISTRICT I	(New Jersey)	George J. Lisicki
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	Eugene R. Manfrey
Past Commander-in-Chief		Paul A. Spera



James E. Nier
Commander-in-Chief
1996-97



John E. Moon
Commander-in-Chief
1997-98

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1997-98

Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon
 Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot
 Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart
 Adjutant General Larry W. Rivers
 Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley
 Judge Advocate General Brian J. Kennedy
 Surgeon General Henry F. Sexauer
 National Chaplain Dean Derieg
 National Chief of Staff James J. Thiel
 Inspector General Daniel Bartholomew
 Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Dir.,
 Washington Office Kenneth A. Steadman
 Assistant Adjutant General, Administration John J. Senk, Jr.
 Assistant Adjutant General, Programs W. Benny Bachand
 Assistant Adjutant General, Marketing Ronald G. Browning
 Assistant Quartermaster General Lawrence M. Maher
 Director, Administrative Services - Kansas City Lawrence LeFebvre
 Director, Citizenship Education &
 Community Service Michael J. Gormalley
 Director, Emblem & Supply Department M.L. ìBudì Cale
 Director, Finance and Human Resources Robert B. Greene
 Director, General Services David L. Swindler
 Director, Life Membership & Dues Processing Gary Housknecht
 Director, Membership Thomas Kissell
 Director, National Convention Joseph D. Ross
 Director, Operations Robert Crow
 Director, Post Services & Buddy Poppy James R. Rowoldt
 Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine Richard K. Kolb
 Director, VFW Foundation Steve Van Buskirk
 Director, VFW Properties Billy R. Weissend
 Director, Youth Development,
 Scholarship & Recognition Gordon R. Thorson
 Deputy Executive Director, Washington Office Robert E. Wallace
 Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director,
 National Legislative Service Sidney Daniels
 Director, Administrative Services -
 Washington Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
 Director, Communications and Public Affairs William G. Smith
 Director, Employment Service James N. Magill
 Director, National Legislative Service Dennis Cullinan
 Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs Bruce R. Harder
 National Service Officer & Director,
 National Veterans Service Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
 Administrative Assistant Russell Cutright

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
1997-98

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH, VT)	Robert W. Madigan
DISTRICT 2	(MA, CT)	William J. Madera
DISTRICT 3	(MD, RI)	Raymond J. Boyle
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	Bruce A. Withers
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	James R. Mueller
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Scottie E. King
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	Leroy Ford
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Oliver W. Dial
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William J. Hendren
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Leslie F. Thone
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	William P. Shannon
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	William F. Cerny, Jr.
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Lewie B Cooper
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	Earl E. Chase
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	George H. Palmateer
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Dannie Cooper
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Frank R. Risewick
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	Richard J. Fruge
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Charles R. Feltenberger
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Rick Frank
DISTRICT C	(New York)	T. William Bossidy
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	George W. Marks
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	Gordon W. Kirk
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	Richard L. Lehner
DISTRICT G	(California)	Richard R. Pignone
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	Ferrell E. Warden
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	James DePass
Past Commander-in-Chief		James E. Nier

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 98TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
AUGUST 17-21, 1997

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 1997

(The Memorial Service of the 98th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held at the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, was called to order at 10:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Ladies and gentlemen, please remain seated as I call this Memorial Service for the 98th National Convention to order. Please allow me to begin by recognizing our Gold Star parents and our Gold Star wives who are with us today.

I would especially like to thank the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints for allowing us to hold our Memorial Service in the Mormon Tabernacle. A special recognition to Mr. Mr. Wendell Smoot, President of the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, and to the Tabernacle Choir, and the Director Jerald Ottley, Associate Director Craig Jessop, and Organists, John Lonherst and Richard Elliott.

As you know, the choir performed during their weekly television program just prior to our Memorial Service. Since they are so gracious to remain for our service, we have agreed to limit our service to one hour and we have made some modifications to the program.

I would also like to point out that the National Memorial song of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is "Sleep Soldier Boy Sleep." Composed in 1923 by a native of Salt Lake City, Dorothy Kenner Alexander, who was serving as President of Auxiliary 409 at the time.

As a reminder, the Tabernacle and the Temple Square are considered sacred ground. Please refrain from smoking until leaving this area.

Will everyone please stand and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country and join the Tabernacle Choir in the singing of our National Anthem.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(Whereupon, the assembly gave the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the National Anthem. The Tabernacle Choir presented a patriotic medley at this time.)

INVOCATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Please remain seated during the Invocation by Monsignor J. Terrence Fitzgerald.

MONSIGNOR FITZGERALD: Let us pray. Loving Father, eternal guide, we praise you and we thank you for the life and the light that you share with us this day. We gather at this historic Tabernacle to seek your blessing for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, for their loved ones and that we might remember their departed comrades.

You have bestowed on us such generous gifts, the freedom of our democracy, the natural resources of our country, the ingenuity and diversity of our people. For these gifts, we give you thanks. We ask that you extend your hand and blessing on all who gathered.

They have defended our country so well. They have served the cause of freedom in so many distant parts. Bless them generously, reward them with your love, and bless the many departed who have sacrificed their lives in freedom's name.

Father, teach us to cherish those values our deceased comrades defended: peace and justice, sacrifice and service, unity and diversity, compassion and forgiveness, generosity and love. Teach us always to cherish your divine gift of life. So we pray in your name. You are the Lord of all for ever and ever. Amen.

(Whereupon, the assembly sang, "Nearer, My God, to Thee" under the direction of the Tabernacle Choir.)

MEMORIAL RITUAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, Ladies of the Auxiliary and Friends: We have met at this time to commemorate our comrades of the United States Armed Forces who have answered the last call. The VFW Ritual provides that the audience refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see that there is no disturbance during this ceremony.

NATIONAL CHIEF OF BILL LARK: Commander-in-Chief, your order will be obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I request that the National Chaplain preside.

(National Chaplain Reverend William J. Bleiler presided during the Memorial Services performed by the National Officers in accordance with the Ritual.)

(Marilyn Schultz, National Soloist of the Ladies Auxiliary, sang "Sleep, Soldier Boy" followed by the Tabernacle Choir presenting "God of Abraham Praise" and "A Mighty Fortress". Then the Tabernacle Choir and the assembly sang "America, the Beautiful" followed by the "Battle Hymn of the Republic by the Tabernacle Choir.)

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN BLEILER: We will now have our Benediction by The Right Reverend Carolyn Tanner Irish, Bishop of the

Episcopal Diocese of Utah.

THE RIGHT REVEREND IRISH: Let us pray. Holy and Gracious God, giver of life, bearer of sacrifice, we give thanks for this opportunity to remember and to honor before you the men and women who have served this nation in uniform; those who have died and those whose faith remains unknown, those who live on bearing scars of sacrifice.

We can never fully know what they experienced in their courage and in their fear, their triumph and despair, their hope and their loneliness. Yet in another sense their sacrifice makes us one with them. For no person or family or nation can endure war without being deeply wounded.

War brings not only bloodshed, tears and fear, it can also distort a humanity, undermine our reverence for life, and threaten our dignity. For as long as memory endures, no war is truly over. So we pray for ourselves as well as for those who have suffered war more directly.

Together with them we are one in our need for healing and reconciliation. We pray to those now in positions of responsibility and power, and we give thanks for all those throughout the world who work for justice and freedom that our children and our children's children may live in peace. In your most holy name we pray. Amen.

(The VFW National Band played the Taps at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, Sisters, Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes our Memorial Service. Thank you so very much for attending.

(Whereupon, the service was concluded at 11:15 o'clock a.m.)

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 1997

(The Joint Opening Session of the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 84th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary was called to order on Monday, August 18, 1997, at 8:30 o'clock a.m., in the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, by Comrade Ben Russo, Chairman of the VFW 98th National Convention Committee.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMRADE BEN RUSSO: Comrades and sisters, I am Ben Russo, Chairman for this, the 98th VFW National Convention here in Salt Lake City. I welcome you on behalf of myself and all who are working so hard to make this our most successful Convention ever.

We sincerely hope that the time you spend with us this week will renew your pride in our nation, rededicate your commitment to America's veterans and bring new excitement to your work as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary.

Please rise as we officially open this Convention with the Advancement of the Colors.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the National Honor Guard advanced the Colors at this time followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMRADE RUSSO: And now this morning's Invocation, the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Reverend William J. Bleiler.

INVOCATION

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Bleiler gave the Invocation.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS GEORGE SARVER: Comrade Chairman, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

COMRADE RUSSO: We will now ask you to all sit back and relax as we present the video of the "Above and Beyond" year.

(Whereupon, the assembly enjoyed the video on the "Above and Beyond" year.)

INTRODUCTION - THE HONORABLE DEEDEE CORRADINI

COMRADE RUSSO: Now, please join me in welcoming our first guest to this 98th VFW National Convention., a lady of remarkable talents who has done so much to improve government and the quality of life here in Salt Lake City.

First elected in 1991, she won re-election in 1996. Her style of government stresses good business practices, coupled with efficient management of people, money and resources. From fuel efficiency vehicles to Triple-A baseball, she is leading a community-wide renaissance that will propel Salt Lake City into the 21st Century and make it one of America's leading cities.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to Her Honor, the Honorable Mayor of Salt Lake City, Deedee Corradini. (Applause)

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE DEEDEE CORRADINI
MAYOR, CITY OF SALT LAKE CITY

MAYOR CORRADINI: Thank you very much. The theme of our Olympic Games that will be coming here in 2002 is "The World is Welcome Here." Welcome to all of you. We are thrilled to have you here. Having grown up away from Salt Lake City, it is a special privilege for me to welcome people who come here from other parts of the country for a very special reason.

I was born in Rhode Island, grew up in Lebanon and Syria, lived in Massachusetts, Maine, New Jersey, New York and Washington, D.C. All right. All of you from all of those places clap. Now, why did I wind up in Salt Lake City? Well, I hope you are going to discover that while you are here for this Convention.

When I first came here as a visitor, and I flew into this airport and saw a metropolitan area of just under one million people nestled right up against these fantastic mountains, I could not believe the physical beauty of this place.

Then when I discovered the warmth and friendliness of the people here, I decided, never having been west of Chicago, that the West was a great place to live and Salt Lake City is where I wanted to settle. That is how I got here.

So I hope while you are here you will enjoy all of the many things that we have to offer, that you will get up into the mountains and see our spectacular mountains. Take a ride on the tram at Snow Bird. Go up to Park City and see our Olympic preparations where we have our ski jump and our bobsled and luge runs up. There are just so many wonderful things to see, and hopefully you will have a chance to even see a little baseball while you are here.

I also have a special welcome for you, because I am so proud that you have decided to have your Convention here. I have had personal experience in what veterans and the military have done for Americans and peace around the world. As a child, when I grew up in Lebanon, I was in

boarding school in Beirut, Lebanon, and my parents got thrown out of Syria during the Suez crisis.

I remember the Sixth Fleet constantly being on watch in the Mediterranean while I was living in Beirut and my most vivid memories is in 1958 when the Lebanese Revolution broke out. I was away from my parents who were living in Syria, and I will never forget when the Marines landed. It was in the middle of the night. The Marines escorted me out of Lebanon with the bombs blasting overhead and helped me escape. That is a sad departure, but I want you to know how proud I am and how proud you make all of us as Americans for the peace and the help you have given us around the world.

Welcome to Salt Lake City. Have a wonderful Convention and God bless each and every one of you. Thank you very much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION - THE HONORABLE MICHAEL O. LEAVITT, GOVERNOR, STATE OF UTAH

COMRADE RUSSO: Comrades and Sisters, again let me say that Utah attained statehood on January 4, 1896, just three years before the VFW was founded. As a state and as a veteran's organization, we have shared much in this most remarkable of all centuries.

From promise to despair and back to promise, we have been what America is all about; people seeking freedom and people dedicated to preserving that freedom even if it means fighting for it.

Those who settled this state came West in covered wagons. Today many of the people here play a major part in America's space exploration programs. Such success is not due to luck, instead it is the result of many years of stable, reliable, imaginative and dynamic state government; government that has consistently given new meaning to the state's one-word motto: industry.

Our next guest has served the people of Utah for many years. Through his leadership, Utah carries forward the traditions on which it was built while at the same time meeting the challenges of the modern day world. Education, crime prevention and the new relationship between state and federal governments are three of the major areas in which Utah is leading the way into the new century.

Just as their ancestors crossed a frontier that led to a new and promising land, those who live here today are on the threshold of a new and promising era, and the individual leading the way is Michael O. Leavitt, Governor of the great State of Utah. Please give the Governor a big warm VFW welcome. (Applause)

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE MICHAEL O. LEAVITT, GOVERNOR, STATE OF UTAH

GOVERNOR LEAVITT: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and

welcome to Utah. Your Chairman has indicated that our motto in this state is industry. Well, we have a new motto. The new motto is, "Utah: Highway Construction the Next Ten Miles."

We are so pleased to have you in our state. We are a young, vibrant state. You add to that vitality. We are a state with many children, but I must confess my wife and I have added to that. We have five children. I might say we have changed the culture a little bit in the governor's mansion. We are the first family to have small children in that mansion for quite a while.

Some months ago I called home and my youngest, who at the time was about four, we had a conversation that took place like this. "Hello." I said, "Weston," that is his name, "is mom home?" He said, "She is here but she can't come to the phone."

I said, "Is Anna Marie there?" That is my only daughter. He said, "She is here, too, but she is busy." I said, "What about Taylor?" That is my second son. "He is busy, too." I said, "What are they all so busy doing?" He said, "Looking for me." (Laughter)

These children really keep us going in this day. I was in the shower a couple of months ago and I get this knock on the shower door. It is my thirteen year old son. He said, "There is some guy on the telephone from Time magazine." Well, at this point I had just broken into a full lather and I am in my nice, warm shower.

I am a politician and you don't want to miss a chance to talk to Time magazine. I get out of the shower, wrap myself in a big towel, and by this time I am groping for the telephone with shampoo in my eyes. I say, "This is Mike Leavitt." "Mr. Leavitt, for \$1.75 a week." (Laughter)

My youngest son and I, actually the thirteen year old I just told you about, we were out at our ranch having a little holiday a year or two ago, and as I walked into the restaurant there was an old farmer who was sitting at the corner of the snack bar next to the cash register.

You have been to these places before and you will see some in our state that have the vinyl booth where you can go sit and put three plays on the jukebox for a quarter and he is there sipping coffee most of the morning. I could tell when I walked in that probably he recognized me. I wasn't exactly dressed in uniform.

We had our lunch and I walked up to the counter to pay. He said to me, "Do a lot of people say you look like the Governor?" I said, "Quite a few people do." He said, "Makes you mad, don't it?" (Laughter)

We feel a sense of deep confidence that you will be bringing us more respect than that in our state. We honor you, we honor you for what you have done. We thank you for coming to our state not just to do your business but to teach our children the value of patriotism and the value of this nation and what people like you and millions of others have done to secure it. We honor you for that. You honor us by your presence. Have a great time in the State of Utah. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SETS

COMRADE RUSSO: It is my pleasure to introduce Jane Tittle, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, for the purpose of a presentation.

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR JANE TITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. Governor Leavitt and Mayor Corradini, I have the pleasure of making the presentation to you this morning. Before I do, I would like to tell you a little about how the over 2.2 million veterans that this group represents feel about the gift you are about to receive.

There is no coward stripe upon it and no shading is written on it. All the blood that is crimson is the blood of manhood's troop. There is no gradation in the fervor of glory anymore in its story. It is the bright flag and a right flag, and the flag from me to you.

It is the flag without fetter. It is the flag of manhood better. It has never done a mean thing, never waved above its roots, greeted hate never shielded and to raw it never yielded. It is a fine flag, a divine flag that in reverence we salute.

It is the flag of all the glory that is written in many stories. It is the symbol of the freedom and the hope of men oppressed. It adds no disgraceful duty, never shame that beauty. It is a pure flag and it is a sure flag, and it is our flag and it is the best.

Governor Leavitt, will you join me at the podium, please. It is my high honor, on behalf of President Eileen Tanner and the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to present to you our best, this American Flag.

GOVERNOR LEAVITT: Thank you.

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR TITTLE; Mayor Corradini, will you join us at the podium, please. It is with great pleasure that I present to you on behalf of the 744,818 members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America and our National President Eileen Tanner, this flag, the symbol of our nation. Long may she wave.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER

COMRADE RUSSO: James E. Nier of El Paso, Texas, was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars at its 97th National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, on August 23, 1996. Jim was the third Texas to be elected to that high office.

He entered the U.S. Army in 1959 and served for 22 years. Overseas tours of duty included Vietnam, 1962-63 and Korea 1967-68. He served seven years with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Command and Control, at the Alternate National Military Command Center, Fort Ritchie, Maryland. A graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, his last assignment was as an instructor there until his retirement in 1981.

While on active duty, Jim attended night school, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in business and finance and a Master's degree in management.

He joined the VFW in 1981, and he is a Life Member of VFW Post 8919 in El Paso. He has held numerous VFW offices at the Post, District, Department and National levels. He earned all-American honors as a District Commander in 1986-87, and as Department of Texas Commander in 1989-90.

Following his term as VFW Commander-in-Chief, Jim Nier will return to Texas where he will continue to work for the recognition and rights of America's 26 million veterans.

Comrades and sisters, please welcome our Commander-in-Chief, James Nier.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a standing ovation.)

COMRADE RUSSO: At this time I would like to present you with your official name badge and the gavel for this Convention.

REMARKS - COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Ben. Thanks, ladies and gentlemen. Comrades and sisters, you are very kind.

A year ago I wasn't able to stand for you and ask for your support, but I knew it was there as I assumed the duties of the Commander-in-Chief of this great organization. Today, I stand before you to thank you for that support and thank you for reaching the goals that we set at last year's Convention.

Veterans are better off today than they were one year ago, and that success is due to the efforts of each and every one of you, and to include the Ladies Auxiliary.

With our 100th Anniversary just two years away, I asked myself every step of the way this year, how well are we fulfilling the hopes and dreams and goals of our VFW founders? Are we as dedicated today as they were yesterday when they gave life to their dream of having a veterans organization that would serve each and every veteran in this great country?

I am proud to say to you this morning that I found the answer in every veteran I met. I found it in the VA Hospitals I visited, and in particular the one that saved my life in Louisville last August. I found the answer in Posts and Districts, Departments and Conferences. I found it in the dedication and enthusiasm of old members and new members alike. I found it in widows who asked, "Can the VFW help me?" The answer is yes, we are fulfilling their hopes and dreams and goals, and we are honoring the dead by helping the living.

Our success has never been measured in membership figures alone, instead it has been measured in what we do and how well we do it. This year has been one of milestones and records, challenges and changes. We're not rebuilding the VFW, we're making it better. From Americanism

to legislative service, we are putting new life and vitality into our VFW programs. What we gained in Congress last year can be lost this year, if we do not meet tomorrow's challenges with new ideas. And let me add that in just the last few weeks we have seen budget proposals that threaten much of what we have gained through the years of hard work.

I promise you today that this organization is not going to stand idly by while that bridge to the future has a toll booth set up on it for veterans to pass through. We gave this country its future and we are not going to pay to get there.

While you meet in Convention this week, I encourage you to look back at our year and review what we have done and what still needs to be done. This is a week of hard work for each of us. We have to put our best effort, our best ideas and our strongest dedication into everything we do in the next four days. The future of veterans affairs hangs in the balance. We can do no less than do our best.

I thank you again for your support, your encouragement and your dedication to our cause, and to going above and beyond for America's veterans. Thank you very, very much.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO 1996-'97 ALL-AMERICANS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: It is now time for us to recognize the All-American Commanders for 1996-97. Much of our success during this past year is due to their hard work and leadership. We will also take this opportunity to honor those individuals who excelled in other programs sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary. These presentations are being made here at our Joint Opening Session to allow all of you the opportunity to give them the recognition they deserve.

I would like to ask the National President of our great Ladies Auxiliary, Eileen Tanner, to join me at the center stage so we can jointly present awards to the national program winners.

I would also like to ask Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Moon to assume this station and introduce our winners as the presentations are made.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Moon assumed the Chair at this time.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I know everyone here is excited today for what we are about to do. I would, however, ask that you refrain from taking pictures that would tend to cause a delay in the orderly presentation of the awards. Your cooperation will allow us to give the recipients the recognition they have earned and allow us to proceed in an orderly fashion.

The first award to be presented is for the National Americanism

Record Book Program. The first place winner is Post 9693, Bay Village, Ohio.

The next awards to be presented are the winners in the National Community Activities Record Book Contest.

First place in Division 1 is Post 4633 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Hampden, Maine.

First place in Division 2 is Post 3343 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Clyde, Ohio.

First place in Division 3 is Post 6873 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Abilene, Texas.

First place in Division 4 is Post 9972 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Let's give these four national winners, as well as the rest of the Posts and Auxiliary that entered record books in the 1997 National Community Activities Record Book Contest, a big hand. (Applause)

The next awards we are going to present are to the National Loyalty Day winners.

First place winner is Post 775 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Ottumwa, Iowa.

First place winner among districts goes to District 3 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Department of Virginia.

The Department of Wisconsin and its Ladies Auxiliary were judged first place winners in state competition. Please give each and every one of them a round of applause for the Loyalty Program. (Applause)

The next award to be presented is for the National Youth Activities Program. The first place winner among Posts and Auxiliaries goes to Post 2135, Peoria, Arizona, and its Ladies Auxiliary. To all of those, please give a warm hand for all the interest in the Youth Activities Programs.

I would ask the Commander-in-Chief to escort the President of the National Auxiliary back to her seat. Before we conclude the programs awards, I would like to provide you with information about our community service programs for 1996-97.

Nationally, the number of volunteer hours donated was over 12 million, and the total amount of monies spent or donated exceeded over \$53 million through April 30. All totals exceeded last year's records. Truly a record of achievement the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary can be extremely proud.

This does conclude the Program Awards. Again, if you will all please give all our volunteers a big hand for the work they do to make our organization so successful. (Applause)

Comrade Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier, will you please resume your station.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Nier assumed the Chair.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thanks very much, John. I am sure that many of the Commanders I am about to introduce set their sights on becoming an All-American Department Commander when they

assumed office a year ago. Through perseverance and effort, they achieved their goal. Today, they will receive their just award, the coveted red, white and blue cap that clearly distinguishes them as an All-American Department Commander.

Before I begin announcing the names of the 1996-97 All-American Department Commanders, I would like to introduce a very special group of individuals. These special individuals are the Post and District Commanders who distinguished themselves, selected by their respective Department, as All-American Commanders.

They are guests at the National Convention and will receive a trip to the Washington Conference in February. They are seated in the audience. I can't see them from right here, but as I read your name, will you, please, stand up and remain standing. Please hold your applause until I have read all of their names, if you would, please.

From the Department of Alabama, Charles D. Gavin, District 9, Clyde Maddox, Post 5658.

From the Department of Alaska, Robert S. Watchus, Post 9365.

From the Department of Arizona, Charles R. Self, District 10, Ronald E. Bubbs, VFW Post 9972.

From the Department of Arkansas, Harold N. Harris, District No. 1, Verlin F. Williams, VFW Post 1991.

From the Department of California, Frank Gafney, Jr., District 13, and David Norris, Post 1537.

From the Department of Colorado, George R. Fick, District No. 13.

From the Department of Connecticut, Alfred F. Perugini, District No. 5, Dominic J. Ramano, VFW Post 7330.

From the Department of Delaware, Michael P. Pizzola, District 4, George M. Ritchie, Post 7234.

From the Department of District of Columbia, Remigio A. Cabacar, Post 5471.

From the Department of Europe, Peter J. Mascetti, Post 10658.

From the Department of Florida, John F. Fogarty, District 21, Daniel V. Hughes, Post 8696.

From the Department of Georgia, Frederick Engelhardt, III, Post 2518.

From the Department of Hawaii, Monte Ray Briggs, Post 970.

From the Department of Idaho, Ray Gault, District 7, Conrad W. Parvin, Post 11065.

From the Department of Illinois, Terry Vance, District 7, John W. Fessler, Post 1308.

From the Department of Indiana, Jerry B. McIntyre, District 10, William Thien, Post 3281.

From the Department of Iowa, Wilbur Tiffany, District 9, Joseph D. Snedden, Post 9662.

From the Department of Kansas, Herbert Schwartzkopf, District 8, Sherry E. Blede, Post 11555.

From the Department of Kentucky, Don A. Potts, Post 1170.

From the Department of Maine, Robert H. Turcotte, District 8, William F. Kraus, Post 10989.

From the Department of Maryland, Ellsworth D. Patterson, Sr., District 17, Robert J. Rogers, Post 6506.

From the Department of Massachusetts, Jean Claude Martineau, District 10, Gerald F. Hurley, Post 697.

From the Department of Michigan, Sherman Gauthier, District 15, Dewey Stevenson, Post 1566.

From the Department of Minnesota, Ronald Janke, District 5, Earl H. Greer, Post 5518.

From the Department of Mississippi, Donald L. Verucchi, District No. 4, Gene L. Schloegel, Post 3253.

From the Department of Missouri, Glenn D. Schaefer, District No. 17, James M. Hughes, Post 5789.

From the Department of Montana, David Hellod, District No. 3, Raymond M. Lutz, Sr., Post 5590.

From the Department of Nebraska, Dale Wittrock, District 16, Steve Norton, Post 1077.

From the Department of Nevada, Paul A. Webster, Post 10054.

From the Department of New Jersey, Henry J. Adams, Jr., District 18, Jeffrey A. Ross, Post 9503.

From the Department of New Mexico, Michael L. Alford, District No. 5, Orlo L. Parker, Post 7686.

From the Department of New York, Joseph La Porta, Post 7955.

From the Department of North Carolina, Carl E. McAlister, District No. 13, James D. Linker, Post 6480.

From the Department of North Dakota, Wayne Paulson, District No. 3, Glenn Brevik, Post 6139.

From the Department of Ohio, John E. Keirns, District 12, Paul A. Lucas, Post 7174.

From the Department of Oklahoma, Francis L. Neel, District No. 4, William C. Bender, Post 4446.

From the Department of Oregon, Theodore R. MacConnell, District No. 5, Thomas N. Tangney, Post 922.

From the Department of Pacific Areas, Emory Russell, District No. 7, James D. Malott, Post 10216.

From the Department of Pennsylvania, Charles H. Prince, District No. 23, John A. McMullen, Post 47.

From the Department of Rhode Island, Bertand Remy, District No. 2, Roger J. Lavoie, Post 5392.

From the Department of South Carolina, Robert A. Finch, District No. 7, Jack D. Hills, Post 10420.

From the Department of South Dakota, Maynard L. Hemp, District No. 4, LaVern O. Winge, Post 750.

From the Department of Tennessee, Ronnie Bell, District No. 9, Bill

Boyatt, Post 5669.

From the Department of Texas, Raymond K. Nelson, District No. 28, Melvin R. Parker, Post 4372.

From the Department of Vermont, Thomas J. Stone, District No. 1, Ronald J. Gascon, Post 792.

From the Department of Virginia, John E. DeWitt, Post 392.

From the Department of Washington, Jack Kelley, District No. 10, Gary Hulsey, Post 1949.

From the Department of West Virginia, Arthur G. Hamrick, District No. 7, Alroy S. Irvin, Post 4595.

From the Department of Wisconsin, Tony Eulo, District No. 5, Robert L. Yugsdal, Post 1916.

From the Department of Wyoming, Ralph Logan, District No. 6, Herb Carstens, Post 579.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pride that I give you the 1996-'97 team of All-American Posts and District Commanders. (Applause)

I would once again ask the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief to please come forward and call the names of the All-American Department Commanders as I go forward and place their hats on them.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Moon assumed the Chair.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: From the Department of Alaska, Preston E. Nelson.

From the Department of Arkansas, Raz T. Munholland.

From the Department of Delaware, Harry J. McLaughlin.

From the Department of Indiana, Omar F. Kendall.

From the Department of Kansas, Gerald D. Mangold.

From the Department of Maine, Erlon B. Rose.

From the Department of Minnesota, Orlin D. Jackson.

From the Department of Montana, David A. Tupper.

From the Department of Nebraska, Rolland E. Hild.

From the Department of North Dakota, Richard J. Belling.

From the Department of Ohio, Craig D. Swartz.

From the Department of Pacific Areas, Robert W. Zaher.

From the Department of Pennsylvania, Howard L. Adler, Jr.

From the Department of Rhode Island, John C. Medeiros, Jr.

From the Department of South Carolina, Tom M. Sherman.

From the Department of Vermont, Roy R. Beardsley.

From the Department of West Virginia, John A. Dillinger, Sr.

From the Department of Wyoming, William H. Saunders.

Will all the All-American Post, District and Department Commanders please stand and be recognized as the All-American Commanders for 1996-97. Let's give them a big round of applause. (Applause)

Comrades and sisters, this concludes the presentation of awards. I want to thank each and every one of you for your participation as these

recipients received their awards.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Nier assumes the Chair.)

ESPN VIDEO PRESENTATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: As you are aware, VFW began advertising on ESPN, America's premier television sports network, in April. The response to that advertising has been extraordinary.

Everywhere I go people express appreciation for the content and quality of our commercials. Our visibility on ESPN has generated articles in several major publications, including an in-depth article in a recent edition of the Wall Street Journal. Our exposure on ESPN is truly a showcase of the work of our great organization and the service and sacrifice of America's veterans.

In case you've been wondering what all the excitement is about, ESPN has been kind enough to provide us with a brief video report of their efforts on our behalf. Please join me as we enjoy that video now.

(Whereupon, the ESPN video was presented at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, comrades and sisters. I think you can see we have a wonderful affiliation with ESPN to get the word out on our great organization.

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT EILEEN TANNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Founded in 1914, the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been an active part of everything that we've done. Together, we've accomplished many things and through those accomplishments we have built a better organization and a stronger nation.

"People Loving People for a Brighter Tomorrow" is the theme of their National President, Eileen Tanner. Its inspiring challenge and Eileen's dynamic leadership allowed the Ladies Auxiliary to reach new milestones and set new records during the past year. In their own programs and in those they share with the VFW, great progress was made.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I now introduce to you the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Eileen Tanner, and present her with the VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation. Please welcome the most gracious lady that I know, Eileen Tanner. (Applause)

I would like to read the citation, if I may.

"Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation awarded to Eileen Tanner, National President, Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 1996-97.

"In special recognition of her untiring dedication to our country

and in sincere appreciation for her enthusiastic leadership as evidenced by the exceptional contributions of the Ladies Auxiliary to the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and, by their deeds, fulfillment of the commitment of 'People Loving People for a Brighter Tomorrow'.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 18th day of August, 1997." This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Eileen, it is with a great deal of pride and love that I present this to you.

RESPONSE - LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT EILEEN TANNER

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT TANNER: Commander-in-Chief Nier, National VFW and Auxiliary Officers, Comrades, Sisters and Guests:

It is an honor for me to receive this special award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. This past year has been quite memorable for me and has given me the opportunity to see firsthand how our programs help our people, personally handing out the pre-paid long-distance telephone cards when I was overseas, witnessing the spirit and determination of the avid wheelchair games participants, sharing the excitement of our scholarship winners in their achievements, and seeing the cancer research projects that we are funding and supporting this year were just a few of the remarkable experiences that I have had this past year.

With each unique experience, I gained new insight and a fresh appreciation for the good that our program can provide. Each experience proved once again that the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary are people, loving people who will go above and beyond for a brighter tomorrow.

I want to say a special thank you to each VFW member here today on behalf of the 744,818 Auxiliary members. We have always been very proud of our partnership with the VFW and this past year has been no exception.

Commander-in-Chief Nier, it was a pleasure to serve with you and on behalf of all the members of the Ladies Auxiliary I wish you a very successful National Convention. (Applause)

PRESENTATIONS OF VOD WINNER CHRISTINE RICE AND YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST WINNER, DOMINIC E. DRAYE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: For the past 50 years, the Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program has challenged high school students to think, write and speak out for freedom and democracy. Today, this program reaches over 100,000 students and awards over \$2.5 million in scholarships.

Through these VFW scholarships, many young Americans are able to continue their education at the college and university levels. We are pleased to have with us today the 1997 First Place National Winner in the VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program.

She graduated from Laguardia High School of Music, Arts and Performing Arts in New York City, New York, and hopes to attend Georgetown University. She is sponsored by VFW Post 95 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Bronx, New York, and is accompanied today by her father and mother.

Here to present her award-winning essay: "Democracy -Above and Beyond", the 1997 First Place National Voice of Democracy Winner and recipient of the \$20,000 T. C. Selman Memorial Scholarship, Christine Rice. Let's welcome Christine. (Applause)

MS. CHRISTINE RICE: Thank you so much for the warm welcome and the kind introduction. I just want to change part of that. Mr. Nier said I was hoping to attend Georgetown. Well, because of the VFW and because of the Voice of Democracy, I am going to go to Georgetown this Friday.

They say pride comes before fall. I better watch my step, because you make me very, very proud. There are so many people that I have to thank, first, Post 95, the Chapter of the Ladies Auxiliary, and District 2, Department of New York, and finally the National Headquarters and Mr. Gordon Thorson.

I also want to bring you a thank you from a very special group of people that are not here today. Last February, 54 finalists gathered in Washington, D.C. They represented all the states, the District of Columbia and the overseas regions. They were from every imaginable ethnic group.

They came from major cities and rural towns, they were actors, auto mechanics, swimmers and skaters. They were by any objective measure the most intelligent and articulate and talented and the most dynamic group I have ever been with. Each of them asked that I tell you this morning how valuable the Voice of Democracy was to them and how grateful they are to you.

Last fall, each of us spent a great deal of time reading about, thinking about, writing about, and finally speaking about democracy. This is truly a defining experience and a chance that we give ourselves in relation to our political system and in relation to our fellow citizens.

How much of a difference can the Voice of Democracy make? Well, just a few weeks ago the nation lost one of its best known and most loved journalists. Charles Kuralt traveled throughout the country searching for heroes, the simple and visible heroes who make this country the envy of the world.

His stories inspired each of us what inspired him. Charles Kuralt was one of the early national winners of the Voice of Democracy competition. I like to think that it was him that made me appreciate what a unique country and what a rare group of citizens we are. Thanks to all of you from each of us. You have given us a great gift.

The topic for last year was “Democracy - Above and Beyond.” Out of the thousand essays, this is just one.

It is one thing to turn on the television and watch a newscast about the pain that tyranny causes — another to see that pain in the eyes of a friend.

I’ve lived in a democracy ever since birth. But only lately, as I’ve grown older and met different people, have I begun to understand what democracy really means.

Last year, my new neighbors told me how they risked their lives to get here, crossing the ocean in boats that were no more than rafts.

This year, my friend Lena told me about her family’s long wait for permission to emigrate.

Last month, Paul, who spends most of his retirement as a volunteer helping children, showed me the number tattooed on his arm, a constant reminder of the years spent in concentration camps.

I’ve never had to plan my escape. Or to hide my religion. Or to watch what I say and to whom I say it. I will never be forced to wear a veil in public. Or to have only one child. Why? Because I live in a democracy.

Because our government is ruled not by the military, not by the economic elite, not by a handful of religious extremists, but by the will of the people.

We, you and I, make the laws here. If we don’t like those laws, we can change them. We are the ones responsible for what our government does. We are the government.

People in many parts of the world are trying today to establish this same kind of self-rule.

Places like the Russian Republic and the Palestinian West Bank are trying democracy for the first time in their history. Other countries, like those that fell behind the Iron Curtain, are trying to recapture the democracy stolen from them generations ago.

All of them are trying to move above and beyond what they have experienced into what they yearn to experience.

Beyond predetermined lives into lives that are as productive as their talents and energy will allow.

Beyond mere acceptance of political decisions into actual involvement in shaping their direction.

All of them, in other words, are finding their way out of the darkness of tyranny into the light of freedom.

Many of these countries are struggling through this process of change. But that’s to be expected. People need time to understand what it means to be free. When the United States began, it took us time to realize we could no longer blame the failures of government on any king or aristocrat, only on ourselves.

Today, our model of democracy is repeated in many other lands where freedom has taken root. Just as democracy inspired Jefferson and Franklin, so it inspired Walesa and Mandella and Aquino.

Just as democracy gave courage to the colonists of Boston, so it moved citizens to face tanks in Red Square and students to face bullets in Tianamen Square.

Just as democracy spurred our militia at Bunker Hill, so have thousands of other patriots given their lives for the cause of freedom.

But the voice of democracy is not always heard in the roar of the multitude. Sometimes it is only a single cry above the gunfire or a solitary whisper in the cells of political prisoners. So compelling and passionate a force is democracy that these cries and whispers can never be stilled.

The power of that force is found in the words of Antoine de Saint Exupery, author of "The Little Prince." His reconnaissance plane crashed into the sea in 1944, but his legacy of brotherhood lives on today.

"Democracy", he wrote — and these are his words — "makes each responsible for all, and all responsible for each."

For those haunted by tyranny that message holds hopes. For my friends, Paul and Lena, and for all of us living in liberty, it holds special meaning as well.

Democracy can never be just a destination — it will always be a journey. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I will ask our National President to please join us at the podium as we present this eagle trophy to Christine Rice, First Place National Winner, Voice of Democracy, 1997. Congratulations. (Applause)

This was the second year of the VFW Youth Essay Contest, a program designed to give 7th, 8th and 9th grade students an opportunity to express their opinion on a patriotic theme.

Over 56,900 students entered the competition nationwide. All 54 Departments submitted a winner. Savings bonds and other incentives, totaling over \$407,000, were distributed by our membership to young people throughout our great nation.

We are very pleased to have with us this morning, the 1997 National Winner of the VFW Youth Essay Program Competition. He was a ninth grade student at Blanchet High School in Seattle, Washington, when he wrote his winning essay. He is sponsored by VFW Post 3348 and its Ladies Auxiliary from Seattle, Washington, and is accompanied today by his father, mother and sister.

Here to present his award-winning essay: "What Makes America Great", the 1997 First Place National Youth Essay Winner and recipient of a \$5,000 United States Savings Bond, Dominic Draye. (Applause)

MR. DOMINIC DRAYE: Thank you, Mr. Nier, and all of you for this wonderful opportunity here in Salt Lake City.

"What Makes America Great."

America is a great nation for many reasons. However, to me America's greatness stems directly from the American Dream. Throughout

history the American Dream has inspired people to develop this country from thirteen struggling colonies to the most industrialized nation in the world. The American Dream exists in the hearts of the American people, the hands of the American worker, the eager eyes of immigrants, and the strong minds of American youth. Because of the American Dream, the greatness of America is guaranteed for years to come.

America is great because of the American Dream of freedom and democracy. It is alive in every person who votes and participates in the democratic process. From small town meetings to the national government Americans exercise their freedom. In the past when this precious aspect of the dream has been threatened, American men and women have fought and even given their lives to preserve our democracy and keep our country free and strong.

America is great because of the American Dream of achievement. Hard work and creativity result in advancements that provide a safe, healthy, and comfortable life for Americans. America is great because of the ingenuity of dreamers like the Wright brothers, Henry Ford, Neil Armstrong, and Bill Gates.

Because of achievements like theirs, American industry is able to flourish and make our country prosperous. The American Dream of opportunity is so real that it draws thousands of foreigners from around the world to start new life in America. They are drawn to possibilities based on the promise that if they work hard they can improve life for themselves and their families.

America is great because of the American Dream of a better tomorrow. Nowhere is this more alive than in the minds of young people. This dream promises that regardless of where you live, the family you are in, the race you belong to, or the religion you practice you can shape your own future through hard work. The most important step in keeping America great in the years to come is maintaining the freedom to dream and the possibility to make those dreams come true.

The American Dream contributes to making the country great because it challenges people's creativity, inspires citizens to reach new heights, it draws people to come and share their talents here, and challenges youth to reach for a better tomorrow. This is what makes America great. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I would ask the National President to please come forward again. Eileen and I wish at this time to present Dominic E. Draye with this \$5,000 United States Savings Bond. As we did with Christine, we would like to present this eagle trophy to Dominic Draye, First Place National Winner, Youth Essay, 1997. Congratulations.

They are two outstanding young Americans. I would say to both Christine and Dominic that the limits as to what you can do in your lives are those that you place upon yourself. I know I speak for the Ladies Auxiliary and the VFW members when I say we certainly wish you both the

very best in all of your future endeavors. Let's give them one more round of applause. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS
LEGION OF HONOR BRONZE MEDALLION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I would like to introduce Boyd W. Winterton, Past National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He is here representing the Chapel of the Four Chaplains. Bishop Winterton.

COMRADE BOYD WINTERTON: No tradition of the American society is more precious to or characteristic of our culture than that of voluntarily reaching out to neighbors in need. Such selfless service is part of both our civic and our religious heritage.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains, a national non-profit organization, is founded upon one shining manifestation of that heritage. That is Army Chaplain George L. Fox, John P. Washington, Alexander D. Goode and Clark V. Poling who, after giving their life jackets to the soldiers who had none, linked arms with one another and went down with the U.S. Army Transport Dorchester after it was torpedoed on February 3, 1943.

In this extreme act of voluntary service to others, these four Chaplains, one Catholic, two Protestants and one Jewish, displayed the highest sense of interfaith unity and the best of the national tradition of selfless service. To recognize and to encourage acts of volunteerism, brotherhood and sacrifice among Americans of every age and station in life, the chapel has established its Legion of Honor program.

The bronze medallion is an award given by the Chapel in recognition of exceptional selfless service on the part of an individual which contributes to the well-being of others at the national or world level, and to a spirit of interfaith cooperation.

Will the Commander-in-Chief and the National President, please join me at the podium. For exemplary countless years of selfless service to others, on behalf of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, it is my privilege to present the traditional Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion to Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier and National President Eileen Tanner.

I wish to thank Adjutant General Larry Rivers for being present and coming forward and placing of these medallions. There is, in addition to the medallion, a plaque, which will be presented to each of these recipients, which reads as follows: "The Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion to James E. Nier" and similarly to Ladies Auxiliary President Eileen Tanner," on August 18, 1997, in recognition of your service to all people regardless of race or faith. This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation founded upon the fatherhood of our God."

I asked Eileen if she wanted me to take her plaque and maybe she had a reservation about the chaplain. She said I will just give it to my Chief of Staff.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I have been asked by Eileen to

speaking for both of us, and I will certainly do that. Thank you, Boyd, for bestowing this great honor upon us this morning from the Chapel of Four Chaplains.

PRESENTATION OF VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD,
GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: It is fitting this morning that during this opening session of our 98th National Convention we present the VFW Armed Forces Award to a very unique but extremely important activity of the United States Army.

Since it was established in 1973, the men and women of the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, have labored long and hard in the search, recovery and identification of our military personnel lost in World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, as well as other conflicts and contingencies.

With steadfast commitment and compassion, the men and women of CILHI, as it is known in the military, have worked tirelessly to help bring closure to hundreds of families who have lost loved ones and who have wondered if their grief and search would ever come to an end.

Since its inception CILHI has identified 593 remains from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. The CILHI team has also rendered assistance in such terrible disasters as the 1983 Marine Corps barracks bombing in Beirut, the Arrow air crash in Gander, Newfoundland in 1985, the USS Stark Missile attack in the Persian Gulf in 1987, and the explosion of the USS Iowa.

CILHI also provides planning information and assistance to Joint Task Force-Full Accounting in its search and recovery missions in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

It is with pride and a deep sense of honor that the Veterans of Foreign Wars presents its Armed Forces Award to the men and women of the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii for their dedication and unwavering sense of mission.

Here to accept this award on their behalf of the Commander of the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, Colonel James Colvin, United States Army.

I would like to read this citation.

"National Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to the United States Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii.

"In special recognition of the unprecedented dedication exhibited by the men and women of CILHI as they perform their mission of searching for, recovering and identifying remains of American military personnel associated with losses from World War II, Korea, Vietnam and other conflicts. Due to their unwavering sense of mission, included in their major achievements, besides their work in Southeast Asia, are the identification of the casualties from the Marine Corps barracks bombing in Beirut, Lebanon,

in 1983, the Gander, Newfoundland, air crash in 1985, and the USS Stark missile attack in the Persian Gulf in 1987.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 18th day of August, 1997. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Colonel Colvin, it is with a great deal of pride and honor I present this to you on behalf of all the fine work that you and your people do for our great cause.

REMARKS - COLONEL JAMES COLVIN

COLONEL COLVIN: Good morning. Commander-in-Chief Nier, Mr. Steadman, Distinguished Members of the VFW: It is indeed a privilege and honor to be standing before you today and accept this award on behalf of the soldiers and civilians of the Central Identification Laboratory of Hawaii.

We are truly honored to join the most distinguished ranks of the prior recipients of this award. As a member of the mission, we have always had the utmost respect for the VFW. The wide variety of programs have a tremendous impact on the veterans and their families.

The programs for the needy, programs for homeless, programs such as the Voice of Democracy which helps high school students strive for excellence. Of course, the countless other programs that offer assistance to service members and civilians alike.

The organization is a valuable asset to all veterans, and it is a great privilege to be honored by such an outstanding association of veterans. The honor of our organization being presented with this award is a direct tribute to the unparalleled dedication and professionalism of my soldiers and civilians to perform the utmost worthwhile humanitarian mission of our armed forces, the mission that fulfilled the promise to service members who gave their lives for our freedom will not be forgotten.

I have been Commander of CILHI for 11 months. Since my assumption of the command in September, 1996, I have just been in sheer awe of the organization's mission and our outstanding personnel. The mission that is extremely difficult, extremely rewarding, and sometimes misunderstood.

The extreme difficulty lies in the backs of our 13 search and recovery teams, the teams that spend approximately nine months out of every year deployed all over the world conducting excavations of crash sites, mass graves and isolated barriers, giving their best efforts to recover the remains of our fallen comrades.

Their efforts take them from the jungles of Vietnam to the tropical rain forest of the Amazon Jungle in Brazil, from the high remote mountain regions of Papua, New Guinea, to the tiny remote islands in the South

Pacific. From the 17,000 feet glaciers of Tibet, China, to the mostly unfriendly soil of now North Korea.

Despite all that time the deploy of these arduous conditions, I can honestly say I have never heard them complain one time. In fact, the only time I have ever heard these guys complain is when I take them off their mission. Our mission is extremely rewarding and for me personally gratifying.

As a matter of fact, rewarding is only a word that touches the service. To be able to return the remains of someone's loved one to the family is an honor that you can just not express with mere words. To be able to answer a question that has been lingering in the minds and hearts of these families for some 25 to some 50 years is an honor that we take with great pride at CILHI.

Colonel Ward Neggas, the Director of the Casualty Affairs Operation Center in Alexandria, Virginia, my boss, who is with us here today, sends me E-mail just about every day. At the end of the E-mail he used the expression, "It is heart work as opposed to it is hard work."

By the way, it is great to have your headquarters 4,000 miles away from Alexandria, Virginia.

This mission is one that you cannot prepare with any cost benefit analysis or dollar value, or any such statistical measures. When you have a mission such as ours, you need not look any further than the tears of the families whose loved ones never came home.

When family members of these mission service members visits to our organization, it became real important and it brings it very much home to hear how important our mission is, to hear these families tell of their loved ones brings realization home to every member of CILHI.

These are war heroes. There are still lives in the hearts and memories of these families. We owe it to them to bring them home for they are truly not forgotten. However, it is a tragedy that everyone does not realize the importance of keeping that promise.

To many people our mission is greatly misunderstood. Not everyone understands why our government goes to such great lengths to account for those service members that never came home. They tend to focus more on, well, how much does this cost? When is enough enough? Why does it take so long? Is it really worth it?

Hearing questions like this, it is very disconcerting for me personally and the rest of my colleagues at CILHI and other government organizations that deal in this issue, and I know for you of the VFW. For the most part, though, these people don't really intend to sound insensitive.

A part of them has forgotten what sacrifices these veterans have made for our nation and the true cost of what freedom really is. However, CILHI, we don't get discouraged when we hear this on the news or in the newspapers, we rededicate our efforts to try hard to fulfill the promises, to carry out the mission to bring our comrades home.

I would like to relate a story to you that kind of brings it home or

brought it home for me. If you have ever been to Hawaii, Hickam Air Force Base where we are stationed, every month we have arrival and departure ceremonies for the U. S. service members that come home. It is a monthly ceremony.

At one such occasion, I was standing next to a veteran. At the end of the ceremony, I introduced myself to him and we were chit-chatting. He turned to me and he says, "Sir, you know, there is one thing that I would like to say." I said, "What is that?"

He said, "No matter where we are sent, one thing is sure, you are always going to get a free ride home." I thank God that organizations like the VFW and many others out there recognize the importance of fulfilling the promises of these veterans that gave their lives to this country. The families, of course, are missing them.

Once again, I would like to thank you on behalf of all the soldiers in CILHI. It is an honor to be recognized by your organization. If you are ever, ever in Hawaii, please stop by and see us. I think you will be most impressed. Thank you very much and I salute each and every one of you, and I leave you with the following: simply, anchors away and aim high and hope. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF CHARLES D. SHORT, SUPREME COMMANDER, MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Charles D. Short was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and grew up on Nantasket Beach, Hull, Massachusetts. He graduated from Sacred Heart High, Weymouth, Massachusetts, and went on to graduate from Northeastern University with a degree in finance. Charlie also holds a Master's degree in public administration from Golden Gate University, San Francisco, California.

His military service includes a tour with the United States Marines and 20 years in the United States Air Force as a B-52 crew member. He logged 169 combat missions over Vietnam.

Among his many awards and decorations are the Vietnam Campaign Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

A VFW member for over 20 years, Charlie has served with dedication and distinction. He is a Life Member of Chesty Puller VFW Post 1503 in Dale City, Virginia.

Please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie, Charles Daniel Short.

REMARKS - MOC COMMANDER CHARLES SHORT

MOC COMMANDER SHORT: Commander-in-Chief Nier, President Eileen, after those remarks I don't know what to do. Let me say to you, however, Chief, on behalf of the Military Order of the Cootie we are on your team for this year and we appreciate all the efforts that we could

give you in support of your objectives for this year.

The MOC is indeed proud to support our organization and we are a part of the team. To Larry, to Joe, most especially to Joe, we thank you for all your support over this past year. We appreciate all the efforts that have been made to support us during those difficult times, and we want to report to you that we are succeeding and we are most importantly supporting our veterans.

But it has been my special pleasure for me to serve this year as your Supreme Commander. As I said before, I am very proud of the accomplishments that we, the MOC, have made this year. I hope during this year that I have let no one down, because I have tried in all my dealings to uphold the finest traditions of our organizations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I truly appreciate the hospitality extended to me throughout this entire country as I traveled from Maine to Florida, from Massachusetts, from North Carolina to California. When I got out to California, my second trip this year, I was really shocked and surprised of the support of Commander Robert Marr and from Junior Vice Commander Richard was really outstanding. I will never forget San Diego. I don't think any other Commander will forget San Diego.

I must also thank my Department. The Department of Maine, who has supported me over the many years, no matter where I have been, no matter what kind of hat I have worn, no matter what was written on my hat, they have supported me. So has my Post.

The Department, once again, I want to say thank you to the Department of California, to all the Departments that I had a chance to visit over the last five years. I want to say thank you and especially to the Department of Europe. You are a grand bunch of guys leading the way.

As for the MOC, we are a little richer than we were last year and much richer than we were the year before. We have worked on the reduced budget, but we have met those guidance and we came in under budget. Our hospital work this year established a new record for our organization, one we can all be proud of. We were at \$35,000 above the record breaking last year.

Even though our membership was down, we have as individuals and small groups contributed to the disaster relief, which is so important to us, to help one another. To our Posts and Departments, my message as I traveled around this year has been one of working together, of pulling together behind our leader Jim, of pulling together behind our leader for next year, John Moon, of working to make our organization just a little better, because we wanted to contribute.

Just as the rowers in that long boat that I so often talk about, we have to pull in unison. We have to work as part of the team. John, we will be there and working on your team. You know, the total and the totality of our organization is much greater than the supplement parts. We must as members recognize and respect one another and work together.

The second part of my message was very simple. Be proud. I say this as a Vietnam veteran, because it took me a long time to be proud, but be proud of your service. You earned it, you deserved it and now stand tall. Be proud of your organization. Be proud of the cap you wear. When you are proud, you will begin to work a little bit differently. You will begin to respect yourselves and everyone around you.

I leave you with this thought, the final words of one of my heroes, Commodore Arness. "Don't give up the ship." Take care of our great organization. We love it and I love you all. God bless you. Remember me in your prayers. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHUNG-YUAN KAO VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: For years the Veterans of Foreign Wars has enjoyed a warm relationship with the Veterans Affairs Commission and the Republic of China on Taiwan. They have truly been our friends.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has consistently pledged its support through resolutions for our friends in the Republic of China.

The citizens of the Republic are proud of their success and economic achievement. Certainly, that success in large part can be attributed to the employment and development programs that the Republic conducts for its veterans.

The tremendous care, support and vitality of its veterans programs have been an inspiration and model for the VFW. We wish to thank our friends with the Commission for their long and beneficial friendship.

Joining us today to reaffirm our pledge of brotherhood and comradeship is the Secretary General of the Veterans Affairs Commission, Lieutenant General Chung-Yuan Kao.

Comrades, please welcome the Secretary General of the Veterans Affairs Commission, Republic of China.

RESPONSE - LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHUNG-YUAN KAO

GENERAL CHUNG-YUAN KAO: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Nier. Distinguished Guests, Members of the VFW, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed a great honor and a privilege to have this opportunity to say a few words here. It is certainly a great pleasure to make so many friends who have consistently supported the Republic of China for many, many years.

For the past two decades, officials from the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China have been invited to attend your National Convention. The delegations of the VFW have been invited to visit Taipei in order to again further understanding of our respective Veterans Assistance Program.

We are able to learn from each other and gain some new concepts and means and ways to better serve all veterans. I am thoroughly convinced that this continued exchange of visits have not only strengthened the ties between our two organizations, but also helped build up strong relations among people of our two countries.

During World War II, the Korea War, Vietnam War, even the Gulf War, the members of the VFW adhered to bring duty and honor to the country, successfully played the role of world peace, protector and justice keeper. I would especially like to point that out.

During World War II, both of our two countries, the United States and the Republic of China, were very cooperatively fighting shoulder to shoulder against the invasion into China and safeguards of justice and the people, and honorably won the final victory.

1997 is the fiftieth anniversary of the Chinese fighting against enemies and making me more appreciative and respectful to recall the gallant history and the sacrifice done as the soldiers of our country at that time. The United States is the leading promoter of democracy in the world.

The American veterans who have devoted themselves to the defense of democracy and freedom have built up a grand historical record. This glorious Commission is proper for veterans' investments of prosperity and progress in the United States, therefore, people around the world they respect your country and the accomplishments.

The VAC of the Republic of China and the VFW of the United States share common goals and objectives in the past. We fought together against violence and aggression. At present we are making every effort to defend democracy and freedom on many fronts, and even in the future we shall continue to cooperate with each other based upon common goals and interests.

Over the years, deep and profound relations have been established concerning the VAC and the VFW. We have approved the twenty-first city and the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan look forward to continuing our mutual beneficial relationship.

With the United States promoting prosperity and stability in the Far East, I am confident that VAC and the VFW will join forces to create an even brighter tomorrow based on the firm decisions of our past friendship. I am aware the VFW is a book we can learn from. For this reason, I believe my visit has been more than worthwhile.

In closing, I wish you a most successful Convention and give each one of you my best regards for good health, happiness and success. Thank you very much. (Applause)

DR. MA: Ladies and gentlemen, General Kao will now present the National Medal of the Republic of China, which is the Order of the Cloud and Banner, to your Commander-in-Chief Nier. Let me have the honor to read the citation that accompanied the Banner.

Certificate of Award of the Cloud and Banner Medal. Serial No. IG1570040, dated August 1997.

"Mr. Jim E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the peoples of the United States of America and the Republic of China and to the enhancement of ties and cooperation between the veterans of our two countries.

"In appreciation of his meritorious service, Commander-in-Chief Nier is presented the Order of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the Government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulation."

This has been signed by the Minister of National Defense of the Republic of China, as well as His Excellency, the Premier of the Republic of China, and by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of China.

Ladies and gentlemen, General Kao will now on behalf of the Republic of China present a commemorative silver plate to National Commander-in-Chief Nier. I will read the inscription on the plate.

"Presented to Mr. James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between the VFW and VAC by General Husc Li-Nung, Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission, Republic of China, August 18, 1997."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Ladies and gentlemen, if I may, General Kao and Dr. Ma were with us yesterday and they will be with us at the Distinguished Guests Banquet tonight. They are truly distinguished guests. We have a wonderful affiliation with their Veterans Affairs Commission and their country, and I want to tell you, General Kao and Dr. Ma, that certainly means a lot to us.

I must tell you that we hope to continue to have this enduring friendship that we exercise annually by you coming to our country and I returning to your country. I wish you God's speed and safe travel as you return to the Republic of China. We are looking forward to you being on the dais with us at the Distinguished Guests Banquet tonight. Thank you so very much. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and sisters, our distinguished guest and keynote speaker is about five minutes from the facility. I would just like to reflect on a couple of things, if I might.

First of all, my wife just received an award, but I would like to personally introduce you to my wife and say to Kimie publicly, I thank you, Kimie, for being beside me for these past three years as I advanced through the National chairs.

She has done an outstanding job and is a Life Member of the Auxiliary and well received in the Posts. You have been courteous and kind to both of us in our travels through this great nation and around the world. This is my wife, Kimie.

We started the 1996-97 VFW year with a promise that we would

do a couple of things. We would attempt to do the right things and we would attempt to do things right for this country's veterans. I believe in our deliberations over the years and over this past year that with the help of the staff in Kansas City and the staff in the Washington, D.C. office, and in particular my fellow line officers, John and Tom, and the Council of Administration that we have done that.

I think that we can now say yes, we are doing the right things and, yes, we are doing things right for this country's veterans. I would like to share just a couple of figures with you, if I might. The Life Membership Program this year has produced some incredible figures.

We have 165,000 Life Members in 1996-'97. That is an unprecedented number. It is unprecedented because next year 16 percent of the continuous members will not have to be signed up because they are Life Members now. We also set a goal to meet for the new and reinstated members.

Some of the Department Commanders who passed by here before me had met that quota and made All-American status and, in fact, for the first time in seven years this organization is ahead in new and reinstated members by 1,431 specifically. We are very, very proud of that.

The other thing I wish to do is to just take a moment to say thank you to the members of the Ladies Auxiliary. In my travels around the country, I have said this many times at Post Auxiliaries, particularly Department Auxiliary meetings, but bear with me as I say it one more time at this National Convention because I truly believe it is very important.

Too often we don't take the time to say thank you to the members of the Ladies Auxiliary. We take the ladies for granted. We know what you do for all of our programs and we realize some of that will change next year, but we know what you have done for Americanism, safety, youth activities, community service, buddy poppies, the Voice of Democracy and God knows what you do for cancer aid and research.

There is an old cliché that says behind every good man is a good woman. I think that is wrong. I think that it should be beside every good man is a good woman and beside the Veterans of Foreign Wars is a great organization, its Ladies Auxiliary. I would ask my fellow comrades to please give these ladies a round of applause.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, comrades. It is absolutely imperative that we work side by side to ensure the accomplishment of our goals and our objectives.

INTRODUCTION OF HELEN BLACKWELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: There is someone I need to recognize in the audience. If we could take just a moment to introduce two individuals who are very special to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Will you

please welcome Helen Putnam Blackwell, daughter of James C. Putnam, the first President of the American Veterans of Foreign Wars Service.

Helen is also a Past President of the Ladies Auxiliary, VFW Department of Arkansas. She is here and I see her. Thanks so much for being with us. Accompanying Mrs. Blackwell is her oldest granddaughter, Vicki Blackwell Norvel, a Life Member of the Ladies Auxiliary, Fayetteville, Arkansas. Ladies, thank you so much for joining us today. (Applause)

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Moon, would you like to say a couple of words?

REMARKS - SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. I do appreciate the opportunity this morning to just make a few remarks prior to our main speaker being here. That is to express my sincere thanks to the Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier for the great year he has had and the opportunity that he has given me to travel throughout this country and throughout the world.

To echo maybe some statements given by General Colvin, the opportunity that was afforded me this past year was to travel with Jim not only to Ohio but over to Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and to see the efforts that are being put forth by these many volunteers, the servicemen and service women, and doing a job that is tireless, is very endless, and it doesn't have a great degree of rewarding attributes to it other than to those personally that are there hour after hour, day after day, week after week, trying to bring closure to at least one person.

That one person is a family member that is missing in action. We are very honored that we get to go over there to see those people and when Colonel Colvin said he had never heard a complaint, he is very true there, because we have asked them from time to time what they felt were some of the major concerns.

The bottom line they said was there is just not enough time given to us. We have to rotate and go back home. We are not done with our job. They mean that so sincerely. So many times these individuals volunteer to go back time and time again.

It isn't the idea of great living conditions, because they don't live well over there. They live, in fact, rather poorly. They do what they can do for this great country and do what they can do to make sure that the prisoners of war and missing in action is taken care of.

I know Colonel Colvin had to leave, but believe me it is a great honor when I am allowed to go over there with Commander-in-Chief Nier, and in the near future when Tom Pouliot will go over there to see these individuals do the work and then come home so many times just to rest up and go back.

We owe them a great deal of gratitude that we will never be able to express in any words other than to just say "thank you". The countless

times that we get a chance to review to and go our or year, mainly to reflect in the past, when I went into California for a seminar, I thought it was going to be somewhat boring.

In this seminar was a diverse group of individuals from many, many non-profit organizations. The non-profit organizations that were assembled there with more or less from the very tall or high professional standards to just the beginning standards, to the realtors, to the veterans groups, to the policemen, whatever the case may be. It was a very diverse group.

These individuals were told that roughly two percent of the respective organizations they belong to was made up of leadership. From that two percent that made up the leadership of the organization, there was two percent that were the main dissenters of every organization and, believe it or not, two percent many, many times could challenge and could somehow upset the other 96 percent.

Two percent leadership, two percent dissenters and 96 percent of the other members wait to see what will happen and fall by the wayside. I am proud to stand here today and say to you that Jim Nier has taken two million members, has been the leader that has worked with this great crew, that has worked with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and has brought it out to be the great leader in this country.

That is not only for non-profit organizations but as a veterans organization, a very, very vibrant and internal and external part of our country. To you, Jim, we owe you a great deal of gratitude that you will never know for your hard work and effort that you put forth. We thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thanks very much, John.

INTRODUCTION - THE HONORABLE TOGO D. WEST, JR., SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a special pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker. Sworn in as the 16th Secretary of the Army in November, 1993, Togo West brings with him a wealth of varied and challenging experience as an attorney, businessman and public servant.

As Secretary of the Army, Mr. West is responsible for recruiting, training, equipping and sustaining the world's premier land force. Secretary West manages an annual budget of nearly \$60 billion, leads a work force of just over one million soldiers and 270,000 civilian employees, and has stewardship over 25 million acres of land.

An Army veteran, Secretary West served on active duty with the Office of the Judge Advocate General and thereafter with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

He has served as the Department of the Navy's General Counsel and as the Special Assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense. He has also served as General Counsel of the Department of

Defense.

Prior to being named Secretary, he was the Senior Vice-President for Government Relations of the Northrop Corporation.

Please join me in a warm VFW welcome for a very special guest, the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Togo D. West, Jr. (Applause)

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - THE HONORABLE TOGO D. WEST, JR.

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY WEST: Thank you. Thank you to your Commander-in-Chief Nier, to your officers and to all of you who are inviting me to join you at this opening of your 98th National Convention. It is a particular pleasure for me to be here.

As you might expect, it is a pleasure to be almost anywhere other than Washington, D.C., today at this time of the year. But it is especially a joy to be here in Salt Lake City and to be here with you, the members of the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary.

Today America is at peace. No enemy threatens our borders. Our citizens can go about their jobs in security and about their daily occupations, and I think entirely for the most part protected by a banner that throughout the world signals peace and freedom for the star-spangled banner.

At the same time, our citizens and our forces face the threat of the occasional terrorists and there are still out there in the world forces that mean ill for our interests in our allies and on occasion for us.

In this somewhat mixed environment that today there seems to be a slightly lessening among the people of American citizens and our emerging leaders who have actually had an experience with the armed forces of the United States, either by serving or otherwise.

That collection of conditions underscores even more the importance of your vote of this organization in America's society today. Your 2.1 million members across the country give definition to the term selfless service. Having served once, you have chosen to serve again.

This great organization is setting in motion the process not just the many good works that your organizations do, but an example it stands not just for our current service members in uniform but for every American who cares about our country, cares about our countrymen and countrywomen, and all Americans who care for one another.

Your work in communities, your work in support of the veterans, your work in support of our soldiers is important, and moreover your work is greatly appreciated. I am particularly touched by your long-standing relationship with the Boy Scouts, who have been so much in my life.

Of course, I could not be a new representative of your Army if I did not express our gratitude for the support of Operation Uplink and your support over the years now of our Soldiers Show, which travels and performs and shows American soldiers, soldiers who do soldier's jobs every day, giving their best for their fellow soldiers.

I would like to thank, and I have often observed at this time that the summer months are time for high patriotism for our country. I know there are other times, other seasons. You and I are well aware of the Veterans Day in the fall in November.

But think about it for a moment. As you start the summer, we have Memorial Day. For those of you who know the Army history, you know that on June 14th, shortly after Memorial Day, a few days after Memorial Day, we have the Army birthday.

By mid-summer, July 4th, Independence Day. That is the birth of our country. Even Labor Day, which will be upon us shortly, is in many respects a celebration of all Americans of the dignity of working men and of working women who have contributed so much to our country and to our country's security.

Memorial Day is of a fairly recent origin, inaugurated shortly after the Civil War to commemorate those that gave their lives in service to America and those that give their lives on both sides of that great conflict of the Civil War and ever since all who have given their lives in service to America.

The birthday is one that stretches all the way back to June 14, 1775. That is a year I might also say that the Marine Corps celebrates its birth as well. Then Independence Day here a month later, July 4th, 1776. They reach back to the origins of our country when patriots gathered in coffee houses, in greens and in homes to talk about what was coming on the founding of this nation, to talk about what they would face and the kinds of people who would be needed, to talk about what was at stake.

It was in those times that Thomas Paine set out what was at stake in the kind of characteristics that would be needed. He said, "These are times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot well in this time of crisis shrink from his country's call. But he, who will stand it now, will deserve the love and thanks of every man and every woman."

Thomas Paine was quite right then in those Revolutionary War days. He spoke the words of George Washington who would read to the soldiers that cold winter at Valley Forge, words spoken of commitment that they would display and the commitment that has been displayed ever since then by our men and women in uniform, by you, by those who serve today.

Whether it was the Revolutionary War or the War of 1812, or the Spanish American War, or the Civil War or World Wars I or II, or Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Granada, or Desert Storm, Haiti or Somalia, or any of the employments or actions in between, America's men and women in uniform have stood for that commitment whether it is summer or in the long cold winters, whether it is in sunshine or in a gray cloud, a commitment to America and to its ideals.

Those ideals are framed in our formal documents of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, but also a commitment to a tradition, if you will, even broader than that. The tradition of our armed

forces of service in the uniform of our country.

That is a tradition, as you well know, that puts liberty before life. That puts country before self. That puts honor above all. Today countless places around our country, around our globe, men and women in uniform are following in your tradition of that commitment.

In this world that is so different from the cold world war of just a few years ago, they face many and varied challenges. We, who would hope to lead them and to support and provide for them, face a number of troubling questions. Some of them go like this.

First, can we in our armed forces and in our Army continue the pace? Today, as I said, America is at peace, and yet the number of service members in uniform deployed around the world is at an all-time high if you count the deployments as times away from your home bases, whatever that home base is, whether it is in the Continental United States, in Germany, or in the Pacific.

Deployments are up and yet our numbers and force structure is down. The active United States Army is at an all-time high of 800,000, now stands at 495,000 headed toward the QDR, which means the number of 480,000 on active duty. Our research components, the Army Reserve and the National Guards are undergoing similar reductions.

So the question is that this increased pace of deployments with soldiers and members of the other services as well in more countries around the world than ever before, can we keep that pace up? Can this Army and its soldiers keep up that pace of deployment?

Well, I give you the answer that your soldiers and my soldiers give me. One of them recently said to me, and this was a soldier who had had triple deployments virtually back to back. He had Desert Storm, he had Somalia and he had Haiti. He said, "Sir, don't worry about us. This is what we signed up to do, but it is awfully hard on our families."

I believe our answer as to whether we can keep up the pace is yes. Our soldiers, all the members of our armed forces can do their job, can meet the requirements of today. But we must look to the benefits and the quality of life of those service members and of their families.

An important part of readiness is every soldier, what I call the ability to have a quiet mind, a mind that can focus on the job at hand, whether that job is on the training fields at Fort Benning or Fort Jackson or Fort Knox, or whether that job is on the battlefield and know that his or her family is cared for and that his or her service is so valid that when they return from that service they, too, will be cared for.

Our second question of the challenges that I believe face us in this atmosphere of many and varied challenges, many and varied dangers around the world, is can we assure our soldiers, the members of our armed forces, that they will continue to be the best equipped in the world?

First, let's be clear. They already are. Your Army is not the largest in the world nor is it the second largest or the third. Probably at the last count it was about number nine in size, but it is the most respected. It is

the best trained and, yes, it is the best equipped.

Our challenge is to keep it so. For the last four years, our armed forces budgets have been essentially flat and we must change that. The Secretary of Defense has vowed to do so. Even with these budgets, we continue to play for a future. We continue to plan to revolutionize the battlefield on the uses of information warfare and we are doing it now with our plans for the Air Force 21 with the monies we have put into it and with our developmental efforts.

At the same time, even as we plan for the new information age of warfare that will be upon us, that we will bring upon the rest of the world and to all the developments in technology, we concentrate today as well on the things that our soldiers need to do their jobs every day.

We upgrade equipment and our jets, but we also buy new trucks so that our soldiers will have both today's equipment and the marvels of tomorrow that will make this the most feared Army on the globe.

A third challenge that faces us as we plan for the millennium that is now only three years away is can we continue to assure the American people that their Army will be composed of the very best soldiers, the highest quality, receiving the very best conditions?

I raise that question today because if you do not know better, you would think that our service members are distracted by a whole host of issues that seemed to be raised every day. Yet the fact is when you talk to a soldier at Fort Jackson or Fort Campbell, or on the Korean Peninsula, or Bosnia, their focus is on the job.

Today we continue to recruit America's very best of men and women. You may have heard that we are lessening the quality of our recruits. That is not so. The change is that instead of requiring 95 percent of incoming recruits to have high school diplomas and high school diploma graduates, we will now require that number to be 90 percent and the remaining 10 percent must have some other high school graduation certification equivalent, whether it is GED or otherwise, so that every incoming recruitment to the United States Army has been educated with a high school education or the equivalent thereof.

There is no change, no different issue, no inequality of our soldiers. We continue to refine our screening to ensure that we are yet what we claim, the America's best. We continue to say every day on our training fields, in our classrooms and our battlefields, that is exactly what we are getting.

But these young soldiers, America's sons and daughters, deserve more than just the best training. They require more than just the best equipment. They deserve the very best in non-commission and officer leadership that we can provide. They are getting it.

Let me give you an example. Not long ago I found myself at Fort Benning, Georgia. I had a chance to have lunch with some non-commissioned officers. They were not command sergeants, not the most senior, but they were also not buck sergeants. They were about E-6s and E-

7s.

They had seen a lot of the Army. They had the Secretary of the Army there in a private luncheon alone for an hour. That is all the training they would permit. They could ask and lean on the Secretary just for about anything they wanted.

As you all know, non-commissioned officers are not at all reluctant to do just that. We talked about a lot of things, about some of the issues that I raised with you today, about training, about the prospects of deployments, about their families, about where they came from.

Finally, I said, "Look, please, what about you? Let's talk about you. How are you doing?" One of the sergeants stood up and he said, "Well, sir, we are doing fine. We know there is not enough money in the budget this year" — that was, I guess, two fiscal years ago — "for pay increases. We understand that, sir. You have got to have priorities. But if you could, if you could do something about our most junior servicemen, the E-1s, the E-2s. They are coming in and some of them are getting married and they can hardly make it. So, don't worry about us, the senior ones, but if you could do something for the most junior of our soldiers."

That is the kind of leadership that you want in your Army. NCOs and officers who remember the creed of the non-commissioned officer, "I will put my soldier's needs before my own." NCOs and officers who stand up wherever and whenever they can to support and nurture and mold and eventually lead those soldiers that America has entrusted in their care.

That NCO is a fine example of those who lead your Army and you can be confident that we will do everything in our power to continue to support them so that they may be free to go about their jobs leading America's sons and daughters and training to fight America's force.

Well, I have talked to you briefly about some challenges your Army, for a large part your armed forces are facing today: the challenge of peace, the deployment, the challenge of equipping, the challenge of leadership, morale and quality of our soldiers.

Yet, it would seem to me that somehow we have not quite touched the nerve ending in the answer to the question why is it that you and I can have so much stake and in the young men and women who stand in your shoes serving this country defending this country's people?

Why is it that we can be so confident that we can do the job that you can do so well? I would say that it is because of something that they share with you, the veterans who have set the examples, who have set the mold.

Let me use someone else's words to describe that something. At the outset of World War II, the nation debated whether to join the allies or not, whether to get involved or not. As is appropriate and is usual in the United States, when matters of war or peace, the debate was hot and heavy. Some of you may remember it.

One member of the President's Cabinet, Harold Ickes wrote about it one day, and he asked this question. He said, "What constitutes an

American?" He answered, "Not color, not race, not religion, not his pedigree nor her place of birth, not the size of her bank account nor his family's social standing; not his profession or her occupation. An American is one who loves liberty and has a high regard for the dignity of men and women and an American will fight for his freedom and that of his friends and neighbors. An American will forego any property and security in order to ensure the benefits of free people for himself and for his heirs."

That is what your soldiers shared with you, those traditions of Americans, those values, those beliefs in one another in their country and in the value of fighting for both. Oh, there are soldiers who share something else as well. Earlier this year, the President awarded in behalf of the Congress and the people of the United States the Medal of Honor to a First Lieutenant by the name of Vernon Mason.

He was an African-American who had served in World War II. After the ceremony, when receptions were occurring all over the Capital, the journalist cornered Lieutenant Baker in a corner and asked him one of those questions that journalists ask.

They said, "What is it that allows you to persist for your battle to your life, what has been your creed, your code, how have you made it?" And it is understandable that the question was fraught with implications of "Vernon, aren't you bitter because you suffered discrimination?"

"Vernon, what do you have to say about the trauma of combat? Vernon, what insights can you give us and what regrets do you have?" Vernon Baker spent most of his active duty time as a sergeant. He spoke straightforwardly as a soldier. You may have heard his words or read them.

He said, "My feat was get respect before you expect respect. Remember the mission, set the example, keep moving."

The words of the soldier, words for all of us, words which describe what you, the VFW and your Ladies Auxiliary have taken on. You have remembered your mission. And as Victor Devereaux, your Director of Americanism in the '30s once said, "You have remembered that even though the guns have ceased firing, your service to America is not ended."

You have remembered your mission and continued to service. Yes, by serving you have set an example for all to see, an example of service for all Americans, an example of patriotism at which the world can marvel by your effective representation of efforts of our soldiers.

You have kept America moving, moving on its promises that it makes for everyone's service. By so doing, you have earned the respect of us all. God bless you for that and God bless all you have touched and all that you will touch. God bless the members of the armed forces who today serve in Europe and around the world.

God bless this glorious day on the 98th Convention here in Salt Lake City and on each succeeding day and many such future Conventions wherever they be held in times of social or economic challenges, whether they are held during peace or we be at war, may God bless you as well as the dear and noble nation to which you have given your sacrifice of service,

to which our service members everywhere give their duty and to which they and you and I continue to give our love. Thank you. God bless you all.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for a most inspiring presentation. I must tell you, Mr. Secretary, that the young men and women serving in your Army today are the future of this great organization. I also must tell you that 2.1 million members of the VFW and the 750,000 members of the Ladies Auxiliary are working as diligently as we can to ensure that the young people in your Army and, in fact, all the young people serving in all branches of the armed services do have that quality of life that you just spoke about.

We are at the Congress all the time, as you know, trying to do the right things for these young people. Mr. Secretary, we truly wish to be their heroes and their mentors. Thank you very much for being with us today.

REMARKS - JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, ladies and gentlemen, we give you our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, soon to be our Senior Vice, Mr. Tom Pouliot.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Jim. Comrades, Sisters and Special Guests:

If I may take this privilege, I would like to introduce to you my wife, Shirley Pouliot. If I may take the privilege of introducing the wife of our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Susie Moon. I am not going to leave anyone out. Also the wife of our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect, Mary Smart, and the wife of our Quartermaster General, Judy Ridgley, as well as the wife of our Adjutant General, Connie Rivers.

Having put my best foot forward, I will say thank you to all of you for your cards and letters and expressions of concern over my recent surgery. I just had my gall bladder out about ten days ago. I did it intentionally before this Convention so that I could be here and I could be strong and I could be ready to go as your Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief immediately when we have the elections and we leave the Convention.

I want to thank you all for your courtesies and the courtesies that you have extended to myself and Shirley as we have traveled this past year. We hope to visit with you in the ensuing two years. Have an outstanding Convention. Thank you, comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thanks, Tom. Ladies and gentlemen, I have one administrative announcement. The Resolutions Business Session will start promptly at 1:00 p.m. in the Ballroom. It will not be here. They will have to prepare this room for the banquet tonight.

I know we will have a wonderful Convention. I thank you for your attendance at this Joint Session this morning and I wish you well in your

deliberations in the next three or four days.

At this time I would ask to come forward for the Benediction our National Chaplain, Father Bleiler.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Bleiler gave the Closing Prayer.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room to Salute the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was had at this time.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. Comrades and sisters, this concludes the Joint Session. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 11:50 o'clock a.m.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION
MONDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 18, 1997

(The First Business Session of the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was called to order in the Ballroom of the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, at 1:00 o'clock p.m., by Commander-in-Chief Nier.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I am going to call this meeting to order. I will ask the Department Chaplain for the Department of Michigan, Lowell Elson, to please come forth and give us the Invocation.

(Whereupon, the Invocation was given at this time by Comrade Elson.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room to Salute the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was had at this time.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been fulfilled.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Before we go to our Committee Reports, I will ask the Assistant Adjutant General John Senk to come forth for some administrative announcements, please.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. My remarks are directed to the Department Commanders. I hope by now you have all received a report that shows the delegates from your Department that have registered, their delegate credentials to this Convention. Have all the Departments received those?

You will get a similar report every morning showing an update, so should there be a roll call this will facilitate your taking the roll there at your Departments. If you have any questions concerning that, please come up and see me after this meeting and I will fully explain it to you. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We will have the Report of the Committee on Credentials. The Chairman is Richard Trombla. I will ask him to come forward, please.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): I am Richard Trombla, Department of Kansas, Chairman of the National Credentials Committee. This is a temporary report of the Credentials Committee of everyone that has filed their credentials as of 12:15 today. This report is up to date until 12:15 today.

Total delegates that have registered, 11,112. Total Department Commanders, 51. Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 27. Total National Officers, 36. That makes a grand total of 11,226. This is a temporary report, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I will now call forward for his report the Chairman of the Committee on Convention Rules, Chairman

Clyde A. Lewis, Past Commander-in-Chief.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LEWIS: Commander-in-Chief, Comrades and Delegates:

The Committee on Rules, comprising of the Committee appointed by the Commander-in-Chief, namely Past Commanders-in-Chief Soden, Kimery and myself, met yesterday afternoon and agreed on this report, and we are submitting this report to the Convention.

To the 98th National Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Your Committee on Convention Rules met Sunday afternoon, August 17, and agreed on the following recommendations which are respectfully submitted for your consideration:

1. That, with exceptions noted below, Demeter's Manual be recognized as the parliamentary authority for this Convention.
2. That when a delegate desires to make a motion or address the Convention, he shall rise, address the Chair as "Comrade Commander-in-Chief", and after being recognized, shall state his name, Post number and Department, before proceeding.
3. A delegate shall be permitted to speak but twice on any one subject, or any pending resolution for a period of eight minutes each, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present: provided, that chairmen of Convention Committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their committees; and in the event of controversy, the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which will curtail further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the resolution an opportunity for five minutes of final rebuttal.
4. All resolutions offered by individual delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or in his absence the Department Adjutant. All resolutions must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to committee no later than 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, August 20, 1997, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the Department Commander for consideration.
5. All resolutions offered on the floor at the Convention, or otherwise, shall be in writing, and shall automatically, and without reading, be referred to the Adjutant General for assignment to the proper committee.
6. Committee chairmen, in reporting on resolutions referred to their committee, shall first read those resolutions on which

favorable action is recommended. Specific resolutions shall be set aside for individual action at the request of any delegate, the others being voted upon collectively. After action has been taken on all such resolutions, the chairman shall read the number and title of those resolutions which the committee has disapproved. A resolution disapproved by the committee shall be automatically rejected unless a motion is made and seconded that it be approved, in which case it shall be brought up for debate and Convention action.

7. This Convention will not consider any resolution dealing with race, creed or religion, or endorse anyone for public office. This Convention will not consider any resolution calling for the expenditure or appropriation of organization funds.

8. This Convention will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by any other veterans organization, or requesting us to join with any other organization in sponsoring legislation not expressly proposed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

10. No person not a duly accredited delegate or member of the National Convention shall participate in debate, directly or indirectly, in a viva voice vote on any subject before the Convention.

10. Unit rule of voting shall not be allowed in this Convention.

11. On roll calls, the Chairman or acting Chairman of each delegation shall poll his delegation on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation.

12. Delegations may arrive at a vote in any manner they see fit, but shall announce it in terms of full units and not in terms of a fractional part of a vote.

13. Reconsideration upon which final disposition has been made shall not be allowed after the session at which it was acted on has been recessed unless the body is notified of such contemplated action prior to the close of that session.

14. When the report of the chairman to the delegation is not acceptable to all members of the delegation and a poll of the Department delegates is demanded by three delegates of said Department, the Adjutant General shall poll the delegates, without discussion of question.

15. Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by ten delegates representing Posts in ten separate Departments.

16. Nominating speeches for the National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate and such speeches shall not exceed two minutes each. Nomination and election of National Officers will be held according to the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and

Manual of Procedure, Article VI, Section 609.

17. Delegates and persons recognized by the Chair shall be entitled to a respectful hearing and the Chair shall have the authority to clear the gallery or the floor or have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort from the floor any person or persons who may create any disturbances which interfere with the orderly procedure of the Convention.

18. Consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present is necessary for suspension of the rules of this Convention. Respectfully submitted, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I move the adoption of the Report of the Committee on Rules.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: I am Ray Soden, delegate from Post 2149, Department of Illinois. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion. It has been duly seconded. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries.

Thanks for a job well done, Clyde. Your Committee is discharged.

At this time I will bring back to the microphone for a correction to the Credentials Report, Chairman Richard Trombla.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (Cont'd.)

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): I am Richard Trombla from the Department of Kansas. There is a correction. The total delegates should now read 11,123. That is making a grand total of 11,237. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, in a few moments and throughout the remainder of this Convention, we will be taking up the important business of our Committee Reports and acting on the Resolutions proposed for adoption by this Convention.

I have asked the Committee Chairmen to use the following procedure in presenting their respective reports. First, the Committee Chairman will read the list of those Resolutions which the Committee recommends be adopted, or adopted as amended.

Following the reading of the list, the Chairman will move the adoption of those Resolutions. After that motion and the second, the Chair will ask if there are any of those Resolutions which a comrade wants set aside. Note will be taken of those Resolutions to be set aside and action will then be taken on those Resolutions which have not been set aside.

After the vote on those Resolutions which were not set aside, the Chair will take up those Resolutions which have been set aside for debate. They will be taken up in the order in which they have been set aside. Each Resolution will be voted on by the Convention as a motion to adopt.

If the Committee has recommended referral of any Resolutions to

any permanent Committee of the VFW for review, those motions will then be acted upon. After action is completed on the Resolutions recommended for adoption or for referral to the Standing Committee, the Chairman will read the list of those Resolutions to which the recommendation is rejection.

After the list is read, you will have the opportunity to move the adoption of any of those Resolutions. Each motion will be taken up and disposed of in order. If no motion is made by any comrade, the Resolution is, under our Convention Rules, automatically rejected by the Convention.

At this time I will call forward the Chairman of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, Chairman John M. Carney.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I would like at this time to recognize the Vice-Chairman of this Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief John Staum from Minnesota. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the Committee yesterday for their long, hard work on these By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. I certainly appreciate their comments and the actions they have taken.

I will read those by-laws as approved, and I will read them by the number that appears on this particular sheet. The Committee recommends adoption of B-1, B-2, B-3, B-6, B-7, B-8. Just a minute. Let me start over again. B-1, B-2, B-3, B-6, B-7, B-8, B-11 and B-13.

Commander-in-Chief, I move adoption.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STAUM: John Staum, delegate from Post 9625, Minnesota, seconds that recommendation.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion. It has been duly seconded. Any discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WAYNE J. THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am Wayne Thompson, Department of Colorado, Post 5061. I hereby request that By-Law Amendments identified as B-13, B-19, B-22, B-23, B-26, B-30, B-31 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Let me interrupt you, Comrade. The only one we have read so far is B-13.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the others were proposed for rejection; is that correct?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Not yet.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): We ask that B-13 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: B-13 will be set aside.

Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Commander-in-Chief, Howard Vander Clute, Post 6467, New Jersey. I ask that B-8 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: B-8 will be set aside.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOE MURPHY (Post 1289 - Tennessee): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Joe Murphy, Post 1289, Tennessee. I would like for B-1 to be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: B-1 will be set aside. It is difficult for me to tell if there is anyone at the microphones. Sergeant-at-Arms, is there anyone at any of the microphones?

Okay. You have heard the motion. It has been duly seconded. Any further discussion on the motion? If not, those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, B-1 pertains to Section 202 of the By-Laws and it amends Section 202 by deleting in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof, and I will not read this long paragraph. I would hope that everyone has the sheet in front of them. It pertains to Post By-Laws, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Now, I need a motion to adopt in accordance with the Convention Rules.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Glen Gardner, a delegate from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I move that we adopt B-1.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. I stand corrected. It is already on the floor. It is open for debate. Is there any debate on B-1?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOE MURPHY (Post 1289 - Tennessee): On B-1, I have no problem with all the changes about the Resolution. My only problem is how it gets mailed out. It says in there it will be mailed out by first class mail. As you all know, that is 32 cents.

Then they tell me that if they are a small Post they need to do that. Normally, the small Posts don't have the money to send out even 25. If you look at a Post with 1,000, it will cost you \$320 in postage. If they send it first class mail, most of you comrades know you don't increase your membership at the next meeting over ten percent.

It should have been, I would think, that it should have been either bulk mail or it should have been a Post Newsletter would have been sufficient to change any by-laws that you are going to have to let all the comrades in the Post know that you are going to change the by-laws or make new by-laws.

My whole problem is with the first class mail. I just can't see where there is any use in wasting that kind of money when there are other ways

of sending out in the communications to the members. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Comrade Murphy.
Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this by-law was proposed because under the by-laws that we have now there is no requirement for notification to the members before adopting by-laws. You can bring it up at any Post meeting to adopt by-laws and whoever is there is going to create for that Post a set of by-laws that everyone has to live with.

Once that is done, in most cases, it is going to take a two-thirds vote after notification to change them. Under this proposal, also, any Post that already has by-laws, their by-laws would dictate how those occasions would be given to the members.

This would only refer to the Posts that don't have by-laws at the present time. So I would hope that we would adopt this so that every member of the Post would have proper notification before a Post adopts by-laws that will govern their operation. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Glen. Anyone else at any other microphone? Hearing no more debate, the motion is to adopt. Those in favor of the motion to adopt will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries.

B-8 is now open for debate.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: B-8 dealt with the realignment of the National Council of Administration Districts, due to the Department of New Jersey falling under the required number of members, which is 70,000 to retain their own National Council seat.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Obviously, I want to be heard on this as opposing adoption of B-8, because my Department is involved. We have complied with the by-laws as they now stand, New Jersey, District I, as having 70,000 members.

This year New Jersey dropped below 70,000 members. It is at approximately 68,000 members. We stand to lose a Council member, or at least have to share a Council member in this proposal with Maryland. However, I noticed, first of all, that B-8 is somewhat flawed in that it did not include in the second paragraph District G and I, which should have been addressed in that second paragraph. So it is flawed.

Now, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I want to speak on this based on the fact that there is another by-law proposal that the Committee rejected, so I know there is an alternative to this later on in the debate. I can only discuss this B-8 at this time.

This affects the Eastern Conference besides New Jersey, because we lose one vote on the National Council of Administration. In addition, it will cause us to have a four-state District. This will occur if this by-law is adopted. It will cause the Departments of the District of Columbia,

Delaware, Europe and Rhode Island to become a Council District.

That seems to me to be unfair when most of the Council Districts are composed of not more than two, and on one or two occasions three, in the occasions of the small overseas Departments, there is one other, not overseas but with two overseas Departments, Hawaii and Alaska.

Commander-in-Chief, we discussed this at our Eastern Conference meeting and we are appealing to the other Departments on the basis that we are and we have all said it and you have said it as well, we are in a period of decline simply because there is a shrinking pool of eligible veterans from which to draw our membership.

This may occur on future dates to other Departments. In addition, it will affect one other Department in the National Organization, that of the Department of Indiana should we adopt B-25. But we stand opposed to B-8 on the basis that we have an alternative to B-8 in B-25.

We feel it is unfair to the Eastern Conference because it would place four Departments together and those Departments would have only a Council member every eight years. New Jersey would lose its Council District when the same circumstance may occur to other Departments in the near future. So, Commander-in-Chief, I am opposed and my Department is opposed to B-8.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 10436 - Department of Europe): Commander-in-Chief, I am Bruce Withers from the Department of Europe and also District Council member for District No. 4. I also rise to support rejecting B-8 based on the fact that the Department of Europe already has to wait six years in order to serve on the Council.

By adding Rhode Island with the other three Departments that we have now, that means that we will have to wait eight years. I personally would like to know what is the criteria for combining us into four Departments. I don't know what that criteria is. It is not outlined in this document. Therefore, I oppose combining four Departments and rise to say that we should keep it at three.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Any further debate on B-8?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE SAL CAPIRCHIO (Post 2396 - Rhode Island): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Sal Capirchio, Junior Vice Commander of the State of Rhode Island. I stand here also opposed for the Department to B-8 because we are going from four years to eight years.

I think that this morning we saw the video during the Joint Session, the Opening Session, and in the video it said about getting to our grassroots. I think the National Council member elections definitely throws a lot of interest within our state as well as all the other states, and I believe by taking this away from us, I think the membership will go down and the grassroots will be hurt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ron Rusko from Post 9460 in Stratford, Connecticut. We have heard Past Adjutant General and Past National Commander-in-Chief Howard Vander Clute say that B-8 is flawed, and it certainly is.

What is left out from B-8 and the Districts A, B, C, and then the letter G, that is the Department of California. So if you would adopt B-8, California will not have any representation on the National Council if B-8 is adopted. I don't think that will make them real happy.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GERARD MISERANDINO (Post 2979 - District of Columbia): I stand to oppose the adoption of B-8. We, in the District of Columbia, right now share the six-year rotational system and it would make us go to eight, on an eight-year basis, plus it also creates an additional burden on the Council member who is going to be traveling between these four Departments, because there is a great distance between the Departments of D.C., Rhode Island and Europe.

Delaware is close to us so we can't use that argument, but Rhode Island is a great distance away as well as Europe. We stand opposed to B-8 and encourage the rest of the members and delegates at this Convention to vote it down.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE PAUL PHILLIPS (Post 2863 - Delaware): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Phillips, Post 2863, Delaware. I rise to support the previous speakers, to ask the body here to reject B-8 so as not to throw the burden on the small states for the Council Districts.

You have all heard the reasoning and I certainly support that. We, in Delaware, ask that this body reject B-8 so as not to throw us into an eight-year term. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RAY SISK (Post 97 - California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Ray Sisk, Post 97, California, National Council member for California District G. I rise also in opposition to this for one simple reason. It is the idea that you have four Departments that are to be expected to have one representative.

I feel very strongly that three is enough. Any Council member that represents three states has a hard enough time, let alone someone trying to take care of four of them. Four is going to leave the Council member every eight years out of their particular Department. I think that is wrong and I think we ought to defeat it. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dean White, Post 27, Department of Europe. I have a question. Which set of by-laws are we discussing? I have

a blue set and a white set.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The blue set.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You are welcome.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DANA HUSSEY (Post 4485 - New Hampshire): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dana Hussey, Post 4485, New Hampshire. I rise in opposition to B-8 basically for the simple reason that the National Council member is elected to represent the grassroots, because everyone cannot go to the Council meetings.

By reducing the number of Council members, you are reducing the strength of the grassroots organization, I think, and putting the decision-making process in the hands of a few people. By reducing the National Council of Administration, you are weakening the organization. I am opposed to B-8.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Let me ask this. Is there anyone that is in favor of B-8? Having ended the debate, the motion is to adopt. Those in favor of adoption of B-8, signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. B-8 is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Comrades, B-13 is a rewrite of Section 111 in its entirety. Section 111 pertains to Life Membership. There were several other proposals, proposed amendments dealing with the same matter. However, the Committee felt that B-13 was the best one to adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144 - Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, delegate from Post 144 in Boston, Massachusetts. I rise in opposition to B-13. I look at the rate schedule, and on the third list, in 2004, we are right back to where the delegates at this Convention last year rejected.

I also rise in opposition to it because I believe, and let me say up front so there is no misunderstanding, before we leave this Convention the Life Membership fees will be raised. I know in my heart and my mind that is unavoidable and for the fiscal integrity of our organization that we will raise the Life Membership fees.

What we will decide is how we will raise those fees. What we will decide is what is best for the members of this organization. I stand to oppose B-13 and intend to return to this microphone if B-13 is defeated to support another Resolution, B-15 that I believe it is more fair.

But B-13 bothers me for another reason. If you come before the Convention to raise the Life Membership fees, if two years later you feel that those fees should be raised again and you have the courage of your convictions to come back two years later after having tried for a Life Membership fee increase, and try to raise them a second time, and two years after that if you are successful, come back to the delegates, to the

grassroots of this organization, and convince them a third time that the fees for the Life Membership should be raised.

I know of no time in our history when we have raised the Life Membership fees three times with one by-law change. The Life Membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars to the vast majority of the Post Commanders and Quartermasters and Membership Chairmen that I spoke to is a way for them to stabilize the membership in their Posts, to give them the ability to sell a Life Membership to someone and never have to collect that person's dues again. That is what the Life Membership is to the Post level of our organization.

But I understand there is also a financial part to it. The financial part is what our National Organization and our Departments primarily get paid back on the Life Membership fees. I stand in opposition to B-13. If the people want to raise the Life Membership fees, want to raise it in two years, let them come back and face us again.

Let them convince us of that in two years from now or four years from now. We should not raise the Life Membership three times with one by-law change. I recommend that we reject this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of colorful Colorado. I hereby move that —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We have a motion on the floor, comrade. We have a motion to adopt on the floor at the moment. We are under debate on B-13.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): I am in opposition to that, Commander-in-Chief, primarily for the reason that the information that was provided to us, in my opinion, doesn't really provide sufficient information for us to have full disclosure to understand what the financial problems are.

The financial report that was given to us at this Convention indicates right now that we have got close to \$42 million in surplus funds in the Life Membership account. I find it very difficult to support a dues increase that will further diminish our opportunity to bring in new members, Life Members to this organization, when this report shows a \$42 million surplus. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I ask for a "no" vote on this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LYNN HALL (Post 6240 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Lynn Hall, Post 6240, Russell, Kansas, and the State Department Commander of Kansas. I rise in opposition to B-13 primarily on the purpose that after review our Department would defer a rise in the Life Membership fees on a one-time basis and object to any proposal of any increment beyond 1998.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173 - California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Richard R. Pignone, Post 3173, incoming Council member from District G. I rise in opposition to B-13. The delegates of California at their Convention mandated me to tell you and the rest of the comrades in this Convention they vote "no". They are not in favor, not of this one or any one following it. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you. There is no doubt where he stands on that.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Don Linscott, Post 1603, Auburn, Maine. I am not a candidate for anything. I am just speaking against this because it has already been brought up. The important thing is to put something as important as this back into the grassroots.

Two more years from now I am quite sure if they could, we would vote another increase. But, gentlemen, I have done all kinds of figures and all kinds of things, and all I know is that the accounting reports are wrong. Last year we had \$122,325,000 in the Life Membership Fund.

We had to panic because of the big pay out because of topping one million. I looked at the report from May 31st this year in your book, which says after all that big payoff the fund went up to \$125 million. I see nothing against helping those ten years when I am gone and the rest of us are gone, but let's remember one thing, guys.

We started the Life Membership Fund, the most successful Life Membership Fund of any organization going, with zero. In five years, the way things are going, we are going to pass on to the next generation a Life Membership of probably \$145 million.

It is time to take care of ourselves and continue. I hope you will all vote this down so realistically we, the delegates, can vote on how the Life Membership Fund is going to go. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE TIGER MILLER (Post 1059 - Illinois): It is going to hurt three times as much to cut the dog's tail off three times. If you are going to do it, just cut the dog's tail once.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ART FELLWOCK (Post 1141 - Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Art Fellwock, a member of Post 1114 in Evansville, Indiana. I rise to speak on this and let me say that I am against the increase because you are asking for an increase in years to come, 2004. We don't know what will happen in 2004.

Let me tell you, we show a little deficit in the Life Membership Fund, but I have seen corporations throughout the United States that have shown a slight deficit and they have come out of it in a matter of a few months, six months or a year.

We really don't know now what will happen. I say right now we

do not need it. I am for just leaving it like it was last year when we passed the membership, the Life Membership thing, and leave the fees the same way, because look at how many Life Members you signed up last year in the Life Membership Fund. Let's leave it as it is and let's go from there.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE EDMUND GUCWA (Post 6896 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am in concurrence with all the previous speakers. I have not heard one person in favor of B-13. At this time I call for the question to put it to a vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. I need a second to do that. I need a second to call for the question.

COMRADE TOMMY THOMAS (Post 9657 - California): I will second it. I am Tommy Thomas, Post 9657, California.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you. I will now call for the question. You have heard the motion. All those in favor of the motion to move the question will signify by saying "aye". All opposed by the same sign. Let me see if I can clarify the motion.

The motion that is before us now is to call for the question and terminate debate. That is the motion that is before us. Now, knowing that, those in favor of the motion, and it takes a two-thirds vote, will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. That motion carries.

Now, the motion before us is to adopt. Those in favor of adopting B-13 will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. B-13 is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. The Committee recommends rejection of B-4, B-5, B-9, B-10, B-12, B-14, B-15, B-16, B-17, B-18, B-19, B-20, B-21, B-22, B-23, B-24, B-25, B-26, B-27, B-28, B-29, B-30, B-31 and B-32.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Howard Vander Clute, Past Commander-in-Chief and a delegate from Post 6467, Bergenfield, New Jersey. I ask to set aside B-22, B-23, B-25 and B-26.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Sir, I need a motion to adopt, not set aside.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Can I move to adopt all of those?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: No, one at a time.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Well, the reason I asked that is that B-22, B-23 and B-26 address the same subject.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: In that context, we will authorize that, yes.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Commander-in-Chief, I move adoption of B-22, B-23 and B-26. If you wish, I will hold my motion to adopt B-25 until you get a second on those.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That will be fine.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE MEAD (Post 9400 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Mead, Post 9400, Department of Arizona. I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We have a motion duly seconded. We are now ready for debate on B-22, B-23 and B-26.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): As you can see, these three by-law amendments address the salaries in the two areas of the by-laws that salaries are discussed. In the case of B-22, it addresses the salary of the Adjutant General.

B-23 addresses the salary of the Quartermaster General, and then B-26 addresses the powers and duties of the National Council of Administration relative to establishing salaries for employees and officers of our organization. The intent of the by-law is to place a cap on the salary of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General at \$150,000 per annum.

The reason that it has been proposed is that it is perceived by me, as by many others, that that \$150,000 figure is rapidly being approached through the generosity of the National Council of Administration who administers the salaries.

If it is to be that the Commander-in-Chief is the highest paid officer in this organization, and that traditionally has been the case, where will the salary of the Commander-in-Chief go if we don't cap the salaries of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General?

If we don't cap the salaries, in fact, in all, where will they go when they surpass the \$150,000? Will it go to \$160,000, \$180,000 to \$200,000, when this organization seemed so concerned about raising funds in many different ways through mail solicitations to non-members and to members themselves on the various programs that they have, that you continue to have a flow of money into the treasury of this organization to come from you, the members and the delegates of this organization.

Now, it has been said by many that this organization belongs to you. The argument on the floor yesterday went something like this. They said this was a vendetta against the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is not a vendetta.

This is a concerned member expressing his view before the National Convention, the supreme body of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It

was also said, "Wait a minute. The National Council of Administration takes care of administering to the salaries of our officers."

That's true. But if the National Council of Administration is to be compared to the Board of Directors of the corporation, we like to think of ourselves as a corporation, although we don't produce a profit nor do we produce a product, we are in business because we have the legacy to serve veterans and their survivors.

Then let me ask you, my comrades, if you did not see the actual salary of the employees for which you served on a Board of Directors, would you be inclined, then, to approve their salaries? I am here to tell you that the National Council of Administration for at least the past three years has not seen the salary of any officer or any staff member of this organization.

They see salary ranges. There are so many employees in Grade 10 and their salaries are between X amount and X amount. No one knows precisely how much any officer makes except the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, whose salaries and expenses are published in the report from the Quartermaster General.

Now, this is not intended to take away any responsibility or any of the authority or any of the good judgment of those good members who serve on the National Council of Administration. As a matter of fact, I am sure there are a few Council members who would be happy to have the guideline and happy to have the by-laws established at \$150,000 maximum salary on our two top officers. It would make their job that much easier.

Secondly, I speak, after having some experience, as you might suspect, because I served 14 years as the Adjutant General. I started at \$40,000 and the last full year that I was employed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the last full year, because I retired in '94 after only ten months, I left at the end of October, but my last full year I have a W-2 form here and should anybody doubt my word, I brought them all, my salary was something under \$118,000.

That was over 14 years, and that was through a salary administration. So I am not ashamed to tell you or show you how much I earned as an officer of this corporation. But I am concerned about the fact that the National Council of Administration does not know the exact amount of salary that they are voting on when they cast their votes in favor of the salary administration.

I have one thing further, Commander-in-Chief. Something else was said at the meeting yesterday that disturbed me somewhat. They said someone had been, and that someone I suspect was me, had mentioned or communicated with members of the Council saying that the National Adjutant General in the American Legion earns \$125,000.

Why do we care what the Adjutant General in the American Legion makes? That is probably so, but we don't care. It is none of our business

unless we have some interest in the Legion. I will tell you this, when the salary administration was established in this organization and voted by the Council, the principal concern at the time was to establish internal and external equity for all the employees in our organization.

In other words, if you had a job that had a certain degree of responsibility and accountability that they could identify with someone in private industry, that is the salary he should have received. That is how we keep people working for our organization.

External equity counts as well. It is kind of difficult with our offices to identify with industry. Let's identify them with another veterans organization. The National Adjutant General, with an organization much bigger than ours, the American Legion, earns \$125,000. That we can use as an external equity. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Howard.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glen Gardner, a delegate from Post VFW 3359, Texas. I stand in opposition to this motion. For all the years that our good Past Commander-in-Chief served as Adjutant General, it was fine for the Council to decide what the salaries would be.

I think that we elect the Council members to make those decisions. Let me tell you, comrades, as the Budget Chairman, at the Council meeting in October, in Kansas City, every member was given the opportunity to ask the salary individually of any employee of this organization if they wanted to know it.

Every Council member will tell you that they were given that opportunity. If they wanted to know an individual's salary, all they had to do was to stand up on their two hind feet and say, "I want to know how much James Brown makes in the Membership Department." So they were given that opportunity.

Our Council does a great job. They have all the material they need, the same things they need to decide the issues that come before them. I think we should leave with the Council of Administration that right and that privilege and vote "no" for this amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of Colorado and Past Judge Advocate General. I am speaking in support of the motion, the three amendments to adopt. And specifically I think there is a strong feeling among all of us that we are volunteers.

This is a volunteer organization. We know we can't operate as volunteers totally. We do have paid staff. It is a great feeling between what we do as volunteers between what others get paid as salaries. I certainly would commend the National Officers for what they have done and the staff for the work they do, but it is a really a question of fairness.

We ought to feel good about this. I don't think there is a good

feeling about what is going on between the National Office and the troops, if you will. Part of it is the lack of information. If this will help to bring us back together, then I urge that these three amendments be adopted. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TOM DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tom Dougherty, Post 3474, Delaware, Pennsylvania. I stand in opposition and call for rejection of this proposed amendment. I have heard the speaker from Texas state that — when I served on the Council in 1983 and '85 that we were aware of all of this.

Yes, if you were a speed reader. They took this budget around and set it in front of you. You were supposed to digest this all in a short period of time. I was also told by a previous Chief that we had the opportunity to take that, they would never refuse us. I guarantee you if you tried to put that in your briefcase they were there to pick it up from you.

Now, as I stated yesterday, and I am the guy that talked about the American Legion and I am the guy that talked about the vendetta. I still firmly believe that. I mentioned yesterday that we have an organization worth a quarter of a billion dollars, which is administered by these people at the National Headquarters and all the Council members have the ability and the intelligence to put a cap on it.

They are taking the power away from our Council members. Why have Council members, number one, to begin with? We don't need them. That is a very important item. This power should not be taken away from them. They should be able to decide whether there should be a cap.

I will state one other thing. I will have to ask the previous speaker to the fellow from Texas, which was on this microphone, I am sorry, there was from California, too, if he were in that position today as the Adjutant General or the Quartermaster General, would he be looking for a cap on his salary?

I think that they should be compensated commensurate with their responsibilities and that should be the obligation of our Council of Administration. The next thing we will be asking for if we have to buy \$10,000 worth of paper. Will that come next or other budget items come to the floor next? I think it is dangerous, and I call for rejection of this amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.
Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE MEAD (Post 9400 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Mead, Post 9400, Department of Arizona. I rise in favor of these three. Let's get the information and the decisions back to the grassroots. It has gone away from that, it has gone into the Council.

I will state this, yesterday it was stated you vote on your representative to the Council of Administration. That is not the case in many states. We get a representative in the Department of Arizona every six years. That means we have to wait four.

That means if the two other states are in opposition for Arizona, we have to wait and have no choice or vote on the Council of Administration. Let's put this back to the grassroots.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Commander-in-Chief, I guess I have a question, first. What does the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General make now? What are their salaries now? We are not supposed to know? What are their salaries now?

If we are at \$150,000, why am I wasting my time? What are the salaries of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General now? I think the Quartermaster General is going to come forth now.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL JOE RIDGLEY: For everybody's information, every officer in the organization that is a designated officer is on a 990, you can look at this. The salary of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General is \$144,000 this year.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): So, I guess basically what we are trying to say is that you shouldn't compare this to paper clips, like my previous speaker was talking about. This is probably the highest we are going to go in the organization and we should have some control.

Yes, our Council does meet and go over their budget, and I don't know about you, but I have talked to some Council members and in a matter of a day and one-half they have thrown them a \$194 million budget and say let's act on it.

I went to the Council meeting yesterday where we saw a proposal for \$1,520,000, I think it was, to put new fan coils into the building, which we probably need.

My problem is it also said in 1995 we put new fan coils in, and when I total up the figures in there, including legal of \$330,000, but you add in the mark-up and it came to \$1,520,000. My problem is that they do have the ability to do that, but they just don't have the time to do that.

I am in favor of putting a cap. Two years from now, we can come back here, if the economy changes, we can change this figure. Right now, guys, it is time for us to decide how much our highest paid executives are going to get.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GENE WARDEN (Post 8552 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Gene Warden, Council member from Texas, VFW Post 8552. As I said, I am a Council member and I stand in opposition to this amendment. I have listened to both sides, I have sat in the Council meetings, I have seen the figures that these people were given.

I was offered the opportunity to see them. I did ask and I saw the figures. I know what our National Officers are getting. I think that if you will compare, if you are working in a field of any kind, what you were receiving ten years ago and compare that with what you are receiving

today, you will find that your salary has probably increased at a larger percentage than that of the National Officers, including our Past Commander-in-Chief Vander Clute's salary.

I am sorry. Take a look and see what your salary has increased. I speak personally from my own salary. I say let the Council have the authority to help the working members of this organization run the organization the way it is designed. If you take this authority away from them, then you have no one who will be able to sit down and do it unless you will do it on a National Board. Can you imagine what would happen? Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JAMES CARLISLE (Post 10097 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, my name is James Carlisle, Past State Commander of Florida. My Post is 10097, Fort Myers Beach, Florida. I have been on the Council before a few years back and I was on the Budget and Finance Committee.

I will guarantee you that the Council knows what the National Officers make. We knew what the National Officers made. If the Council now does not know what the National Officers make, then the Council should do their job and demand to know.

The Council of Administration runs this organization. They should run it. If they don't know what they have, then they should know. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RAY SISK (Post 97 - California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ray Sisk, Post 97, California, District G Council of Administration. I would just like to clarify a few facts that were stated by our first speaker. The fact that, first of all, the Council of Administration, I know for the last two years it certainly has been given figures for each of the categories.

They were told by Past Budget Chairman Joe Scerra from Massachusetts, Cliff Olson and by Glen Gardner this year. Any individual that wanted to see an individual number, the salary, it was there and available. I chose to do such a thing, and I can tell you right now that our Quartermaster General and our Adjutant General does not make \$144,000. They only make \$143,776.

Now, I had the opportunity and pleasure of serving on the National Budget Committee for the last two years. I have been the California Budget Chairman for several years, and we have never had a red budget, and I am very happy to say we have had a surplus the last two years, no matter what anybody made in this organization.

I am very, very happy to stand here and say that I don't think that for one minute that these two gentlemen are overpaid. I pay a general manager of my trucking company damn near that much money to run 20 trucks across the United States, and it certainly doesn't take a college education for that.

So I rise and say that is not too much money for our Quartermaster General. You can put a cap on it if you want to, but I also want to say that the Council of Administration does not run this organization, you people here on the floor run this organization. I am certainly aware of that. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Before I call for any other debate, let me ask, please, let's have considerate deliberations and please refrain from the boo's and cat calls, please.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE MYRON YOUNG (Post 9571 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, my name is Myron Young. I am a delegate from Post 9571, Ellsworth, Ohio. I am a former National Council member. I sat on the National Council for two years and never once did I ever hear of any of the National Officers getting out on the floor after they had left the National Office and ridicule as it has been done here today.

I think to stand there and take on debate past the rules of the Convention, I think that was totally wrong. I think that it is time, comrades, that we all get together, vote "no" on this issue and let our Council members, as they have done in this organization from its very beginning, let the National Officers and the men that you elect as National Council members on the Board of Directors, if you will, let them continue to run this organization as they have in the past. It has been tremendously successful, and let's continue to keep it that way. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE EUGENE MANFREY (Post 6827 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Gene Manfrey, VFW Post 6827, St. Petersburg, Florida. I am a Council member from Area J. Comrade Commander, officers and members, this sounds like déjà vu. I can remember just a few years ago the same thing happened when a Past Commander-in-Chief by the name of Joe Scerra challenged the chair..

Howard Vander Clute was the Adjutant General at the time. They asked for the specific amount of money that the officers were making. We had a good comrade just a minute ago just ask what it was. National did not say anything. They gave you the number. They told you how much they are paid.

I served on that National Council of Administration and on the Budget and Finance Committee, and I had that privilege. I had the privilege of seeing what the National Officers made and there was never any debate. I think what we are talking about, after all this is a corporation with over \$33 million.

We are paying our CEO \$144,000. He should be getting more than that. You know that. Let's keep this organization and quit kibitzing about how much someone makes and work for the organization. They are all working for us. You work with them.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MOON (Post 2873

-Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, John Moon, Post 2873, Grover Hill, Ohio, a delegate and also Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I recently met along with you and a couple of other representatives with a management firm who for many years has watched and safeguarded some of the views and the ways that our organization has run.

They not only watch our organization, but they take care of many other organizations. It is a management consulting firm. This group of individuals came forth at our request, not at their own request, but at our request to give us some insight as to this particular by-law.

They reviewed it, simply made a statement to start this at the Veterans of Foreign Wars or any other level of an organization is going to prove to be the downright out and out downsizing of an organization as to the importance of it. What we have got from them in that long meeting that we did hold with them was the fact that we would be one of the first to ever do this, and they did not feel it was in our best interest to do so.

They said, however, any time you want to do that, that again is the right of the body. They said that is why you have a so-called Board of Directors. That is the Council of Administration that is elected throughout this country to represent those respective states or those respective departments in the best interests of the organization.

Although they may not be popular decisions they make, those decisions that are made are, as a Board of Directors, on how this organization should be steered in between Conventions. Included in that, Commander-in-Chief, is the rate structure for the individuals that work at the National level, they being in Kansas City or Washington, D.C.

That is why the support of this by-law for rejection is in the best interest of this organization, to allow that Board of Directors and to allow that Council of Administration that we elect every two years to make that decision on behalf of each and every individual.

It is not to take the authority away from those individuals that are delegates on this floor or any Convention floor, but it is designed to be in the best interest to look closely at the budget, to make those decisions on the budget, the way they see fit and the way they can feel it is justifiable for everyone's best interests. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

ADJUTANT GENERAL LARRY W. RIVERS (Post 1736 - Louisiana): Commander-in-Chief, Larry Rivers, a delegate from Post 1736, Alexandria, Louisiana. My fellow comrades, I had not planned to get to this microphone at any point during this debate.

I want to preface my remarks and tell you why. I am tired of being the issue instead of us honestly looking at the issues. We can say whatever we want to say, but many of us here, and probably everyone in this room knows that is the case.

I want to set the record straight, and that is the only reason I am here, because there are inferences made, there are inferences made since I

have been Adjutant General somehow the procedures have changed, that things have been put in place by me somehow designed for my personal benefit to the detriment of this organization.

Those that have differences of opinion too often want to couch what they say as speaking for truth. Let me tell you, I am one of truth. I have served my country well. I have served my family well. I work hard for this organization. I am tired of being the whipping boy.

I want to tell you what the procedures are and how long they have been in place. The Adjutant General had the opportunity to make more than \$150,000 way before I became Adjutant General. There was never any move to put any cap on anybody's salary

I want to tell you something else, too, and it is very personal, and it is very difficult for me to stand up here and have to be this personal to so many people. I am not afraid to because I don't have anything to hide. I made more money by \$100,000 the last year I practiced law than I make now in the VFW. I am not a money grubber; I am not a money grubber.

I want to tell you what the procedures are and how that has always been. They have always been in place. You know, there is a certain degree of secrecy with salaries. I will tell you why. It is because we have employees in Kansas City that make different salaries.

In order to make our organization work, we don't need secretaries comparing salaries with each other. We don't need managers and directors comparing salaries with each other that will tend to undermine the cohesion we need with our employees.

We respect their privacy. Maybe if you say by virtue of serving as your Adjutant General, while I am temporary in this office, just as my predecessors have been, no one owns the office of Adjutant General or Quartermaster General. We serve at the pleasure of this organization. That is the way those decisions need to be made.

Do we deserve a certain amount of privacy like everybody else? Simply because we make our living trying to serve you American veterans well, we are not entitled to that? We ought to stand here and tell you what every secretary makes and undermine the cohesion?

The reason there is a modicum of secrecy is because of that need, and that is the way it has always been. Throughout these debates or these kind of inferences, all of that has come about in the past three years because now you have those that want to make me out to be a devil.

I have not changed one procedure in either the Council meetings, how they deal with salaries, how they address that issue, how salaries are set. In fact, when I was sitting up there when they said tell me your salary, I didn't even know it. I said I make something over \$140,000.

I have never once talked to any member of this organization about how much you ought to pay me for the work I do as your Adjutant General. I never will. You make that decision through the Council members. Yes, the Council does run this organization when the Convention is not in session, because that is what the by-laws say; that is what the by-laws say.

That is not me, that is not the Quartermaster General, that is what the by-laws say. I have not changed one procedure. I don't have any control over salaries. I am not telling you to vote yes or no. That is for you to decide. But the inference is somehow there is something sinister afoot in Kansas City because we have new people there with different names and different faces and, yes, in many cases different ideas.

You can tar and feather us for every ill, and to couch your opposition and your animosity toward us personally in the name of the troops is dead wrong. I wanted to get up on this floor and say it. I enjoy working for you. I am going to continue working for you as long as you want me regardless of what my salary is.

So let's call a spade a spade. That is what is going on here. Couch it in whatever way you will, but make no mistake what is at stake here. Thank you, my friends.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK (Post 1114 - Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Art Fellwock, Post 1114, Evansville, Indiana. Let's get it straight. We are not trying to take anything away from the Council of Administration. What we are doing here, this is the governing body and the governing body is trying to tell the Council of Administration they want the salary at \$150,000.

Now, it is in addition to that, each of these get a new car, which is paid for completely by the VFW, the use of it, the gasoline and everything else. So you have to add that on to there, too. You know, if I was working for a corporation and another corporation offered me \$50,000 more in salary, by golly I would think of my family and say I am going to go to that other corporation because this \$50,000 means money in my pocket which I can take care of my family a little bit better and have some of the luxuries.

Let's look at what it costs, \$150,000. Let's round that off to \$150,000. Do you know to pay \$150,000, you have to collect 27,272 dues to pay one salary of \$150,000. This means that the State of Alabama, who has volunteers who go out and get membership, whose salary they have in their company is probably less than \$40,000 or \$50,000 a year, get the volunteers to go out and collect these dues, every dues that is collected in the State of Alabama and every dues that is collected in the State of Oklahoma would have to go to pay the two salaries.

You know, this is a volunteer organization. I think we have got to keep it within that frame. Therefore, I rise to support this amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BILL BREEN (Post 1002 - Nevada): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this is Bill Breen, Department of Nevada, Past National Council member 1991-'93. I am up here and I agree with the Resolution. I think we should have a salary cap.

I have to agree with the comrades this thing could get out of line. It could get way out of line if we don't have a cap on it. But I also agree that the Council of Administration should have some power or authority to

set the salaries.

In conclusion, I disagree wholeheartedly with the National Budget Chairman when he got up and stated that all Council members have always been allowed to see the budget. Now, let me tell you something that happened the year of 1991-'92.

We were informed by the National Budget Committee Chairman at that time that we couldn't see that budget because it was against the Privacy Act. Now, how many of you people have heard that before? That is exactly what we were told. The Privacy Act, my butt. You people approved those salaries and you are entitled to know what they make. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE CHARLES WILLIAMS (Post 3665 - Louisiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Charles Williams, Post 3665, Louisiana. I stand to reject this Proposal B-26 for two reasons. One, we are singling out two members of our organization.

Out of the 2.2 million, we are saying cap those two people's salaries but let everybody do whatever the hell they want to do. Take the power away from the Council of Administration on these two individuals, but let the Council of Administration set the salaries and all the other things for everybody else that is employed by the National Organization.

When you cap salaries, just like the President capped the military retirees, when you start capping it, you start losing good people. Now, what happens down the road a year from now if something happens to Larry Rivers and we go out and get somebody else and they say I want \$190,000 or I won't take the job?

We can't get anybody to take it for \$150,000. I say let the Council of Administration do their job, set the salary schedule, whatever the Council of Administration thinks is fair, and if my Council member is not doing what I ask, I will go out and elect another Council of Administration member as soon as I can that will go in there and do what we ask him to do.

Let's leave it with the Council of Administration, the salary schedule. If we are going to do it, let's cap everybody's salaries in the VFW and not just single out these two individuals.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BOB CURRIEO (Post 9972 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Bob Currieo, a delegate from Post 9972, Arizona. I rise in support of the Resolution. I think we are missing and steering away from the main question before the floor.

It is not whether the Council of Administration does a good job or a quiet job, or whatever job they do between National Conventions, or whether the national staff does a good job or a poor job. The question is the delegates at this Convention here assembled have the right and have the duty to set the boundaries for the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization.

You only have one chance to do it and it is at this Convention. You

don't come to the Convention to go sightseeing. You come to act on these Resolutions and carry that message back to your Posts, and your Posts will inform the delegates. Support this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN CAMFIELD (Post 1999 - California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to this Resolution. I am a retired engineer and I don't make anywhere near the \$150,000. The \$150,000 seems like a lot of money, and it is a lot of money. But for the leaders or the head people of an organization as large as the National Veterans of Foreign Wars, \$150,000 is not a lot of money.

You can verify this by attending any of the other large corporations' meetings and just ask how much the CEOs of these organizations make. I guarantee you that you will not find one who is anywhere near the bottom of \$150,000. I think the Council of Administration should have the responsibility because I myself don't know whether \$150,000 is a reasonable figure or whether it is too low of a figure, which I think it is, or maybe it is too high.

But let's give that responsibility to the people we have elected, the Council members. If we don't like it, then we ask the Council member and if he or she does not give us the information, then we should write as one of the previous speakers said, it is available.

If we don't like it, then we should let our Council member know and for the next election ahead of time direct the Council member as to how we feel on the situation. I urge a "no" vote on this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144 - Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, Post 144, Boston, Massachusetts. Just like the Adjutant General, I had no intention of coming to the microphone on this issue, but it was his very eloquent, very moving speech to this Convention that drew me up here.

I am up here for one specific reason. For the past year, and perhaps even longer, I am one of the individuals in this organization that has been tagged with the title. I am one of the individuals in this organization who has been pointed to when we discuss an issue that some people don't agree with as someone who has a vendetta.

I have tried in my entire career in this organization to come to the microphone at the Convention, to come before everybody of this organization and to discuss issues, to debate and argue, if necessary, for the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Quite frankly, I am getting very tired of that old dead horse being beat every time you come to a microphone and you disagree with someone, to have the individuals claim that it is a personal attack, that that is the only reason why you are coming to the microphone.

Anyone that wants to label me with that kind of tag, go ahead. Those of you who have known me for the more than 30 years that I have been a member of this organization know where my heart is, know where

my mind is, and know how I feel about the VFW.

I resent anyone in any position in this organization that takes my motives and turns them around. I am not going to stand for it anymore. If you want to debate issues, let's debate them. When you replace an individual in a corporation, when you have someone that you are replacing who is being paid a salary and you are bringing in someone new to fill that position, and they do not have the experience in that position yet, you do not bring them in at the same salary or higher.

We do, and we have done it. We have done it for the last three Quartermaster Generals and we did it with the Adjutant General. They talked about the previous Adjutant General. They talked about his salary. They talked about the fact that the ability to achieve \$150,000 has always been there. Well, it has. But we have never gotten close to it.

We are getting close to it. We are getting close to it in a climate where year after year we lose tens of thousands of members. We are coming close to it in a climate where our Departments are laying off people and finding people to fill two jobs.

They are cutting back. They are limiting the salaries of the Quartermasters and Adjutant Generals in the Departments. They are limiting the salaries of service officers and what the secretaries get. We are limiting everywhere.

There is nothing wrong with us coming to the Convention and saying in that atmosphere is it not best for us to say there should be a cap on the salaries? As far as the Council of Administration is concerned, with all due respect to every individual who has served on that Council, the ruling body of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is the National Convention. We do not ever give our responsibility to anyone else, so I urge everyone to support this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ROLAND FURST (Post 9972 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Roland Furst, delegate from Sierra Vista Post 9972, Department of Arizona. While I rise in favor of this motion to adopt, I would like to offer a couple of observations.

Earlier a comrade made mention of the fact that an organization recommended that we continue to raise salaries. I would like to say today the value of this organization is measured by the salaries of its National Officers. Today we are indeed in a sorry state of affairs.

Secondly, I would like to offer this observation also. At a time when the awards and recognitions coming from National Headquarters have been reduced and reduced and reduced, to the point that my All-American Post Commander has to pay for his own breakfast, then once again we have come to a sorry state of affairs.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I can respond to that comment. The All-American Commanders have received this year more in monetary compensation or benefits, whatever you want to call it, than they have ever in the past. They came here as our guests and are going to the Washington

Conference. That is a personal observation.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PAUL MONTGOMERY (Post 3465 - Idaho): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Montgomery, Post 3465, Nampa, Idaho. I am Post Quartermaster and I hold no other office. However, I know that the Adjutant General is appointed by the Commander-in-Chief. The Quartermaster General is elected.

The Quartermaster General is elected by this body and the Commander-in-Chief is elected by this body. Why cannot this body dictate the caps on their salaries? If we look at their salaries, I know that in most corporations somebody is hired at a salary, they get raises for a certain number of years, and in 20 years they retire at a certain amount.

They don't hire another man back at this same amount. They start them out at a base salary to graduate up again. The cost-of-living allowance right now for our top officers is almost \$5,000 a year if they get a three-percent cost-of-living allowance.

Now, I have got a lot of people out there in my Post that do a lot of work. They might make \$537 a month on their pension. Let's get real. These guys up here at National do a fantastic job. I have worked with them for 14 years as a Quartermaster and I know that they do good work.

We need to think about our responsibilities, comrades. So just keep that in mind when you vote on this. I recommend that we pass this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE MICHAEL BURRIS (Post 2615 - North Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Mike Burris from Post 2615, Department of North Carolina. Comrades, I believe we all understand what has been proposed on this by-law. We are either going to cap it or leave it with the Council of Administration.

I am like Larry Rivers, I am tired of hearing this bickering and differences that don't relate to the issue. Therefore, Commander-in-Chief, I move to call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ARTHUR SHELL (Post 2843 - North Carolina): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The motion has been made and duly seconded. We need to vote on moving the question. All those in favor of the motion to move the question will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed by the same sign. We will move the question.

The motion is to adopt B-22, B-23 and B-26. I want to make sure of one thing. The people that vote on this motion, or any motion, must have in their possession the National VFW registered card. That is for any motion. We neglected to announce that. You have to have one of those cards. You have to be a registered delegate.

Now, those in favor of adopting B-22, B-23 and B-26, signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The Chair rules that B-22,

B-23 and B-26 are rejected because it takes a two-thirds vote.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Vander Clute, New Jersey, Post 6467, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: It takes ten Departments.

COMRADE LESLIE CHADWICK (Department of Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Leslie Chadwick, Department of Massachusetts, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is two.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ron Rusko, Post 9460, Stratford, Connecticut, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is three.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wayne Thompson, Department of Colorado, Post 5061, requests a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is four.

COMRADE ERNEST MEYERS (Department of Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ernest Meyers, Senior Vice Commander from Michigan, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is five.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE PHILIP SCHIFFMAN (Post 8691 - New York): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Philip Schiffman, Post 8691, Department Commander of New York, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is six.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CARL EBY (Post 2503 - Nebraska): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Carl Eby, Post 2503, Commander of Nebraska, I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is seven.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CLYDE DAVIS (Department of Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Clyde Davis, Commander of the Department of Illinois, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GREG WOODRING (Post 10308 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Greg Woodring, Post 10308, Department Commander, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: What department, sir?

COMRADE GREG WOODRING (Post 10308 - Arizona): The Department of Arizona.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is nine.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PHILIP FARRELL (Post 11299 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Philip Farrell, Commander of the great State of

Maine, requests a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is ten. I will ask the Adjutant General to conduct the roll call vote. We will take a ten-minute break to get ready for the roll call vote and time to caucus.

(RECESS.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Please find your seat so we can proceed with the roll call vote. Thank you, comrades. To expedite the process, I will ask the Department Commanders to please line up in alphabetical order at all three mikes. Line up in alphabetical order.

As the Adjutant General goes through the roll, all the Department Commanders should be at Microphones 1, 2 and 3. I am asking the Assistant Adjutant General John Senk to come forward and call the roll. May I have order, please. The motion is to adopt B-22, B-23 and B-26. We will now have the roll call vote.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: First of all, before I begin, the Credentials Committee gave me a correction. Please note that correction. It has to do with Connecticut. Their delegate strength is 225 and the total with the registration of the Commander would be 226.

That makes the total delegate strength 11,251. The grand total is 11,365. It needs 7,577 votes to pass. That will be two-thirds.

...As Assistant Adjutant General Senk called the roll, the following votes were cast: ...

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Commander-in-Chief Nier		X
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Moon		X
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Pouliot	X	
Adjutant General Rivers		X
Quartermaster General Ridgley - (Voted with Post)		
Judge Advocate General Herrst - (Voted with Post)		
Surgeon General Reif		X
National Chaplain Bleiler - (Voted with Post)		
National Chief of Staff Lark		X
Inspector General Stephens		X
<u>DISTRICTS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
District No. 1 - Arthur Roy	X	
District No. 2 - William J. Madera		X
District No. 3 - Armondo C. Azzinaro	X	
District No. 4 - Bruce A. Withers		X
District No. 5 - John L. Dahman		
District No. 6 - Scottie E. King		X
District No. 7 - Roy C. Womble	X	

District No. 8 - Oliver W. Dial		X
District No. 9 - George M. Pullie		X
District No. 10 - Leslie F. Thone		X
District No. 11 - Bernard J. Boyle		X
District No. 12 - William F. Cerny, Jr.		X
District No. 13 - Jack L. Armagost	X	
District No. 14 - Earl E. Chase	X	
District No. 15 - James H. Ferguson	X	
District No. 16 - Dannie Cooper	X	
District No. 17 - Gary L. Clark		
District A - Armon J. Long		X
District B - Russell R. Rieke	X	
District C - Ralph U. DeMarco		
District D - George W. Marks		X
District E - Gordon W. Kirk		X
District F - Wayne A. Buck		X
District G - Raymond C. Sisk		X
District H - Ferrell Warden		X
District I - George J. Lisicki	X	
District J - Eugene R. Manfrey		X

<u>STATE</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Alabama		197
Alaska	50	34
Arizona	202	
Arkansas		158
California	186	401
Colorado	190	
Connecticut	226	
Delaware	44	76
District of Columbia	35	2
Department of Europe	3	31
Florida		437
Georgia		174
Hawaii	37	
Idaho	77	
Illinois	690	
Indiana	306	
Iowa	139	
Kansas	240	27
Kentucky	25	113
Latin America/Caribbean	28	
Louisiana	1	168
Maine	109	1
Maryland	322	16
Massachusetts	292	80

Michigan	345	127
Minnesota		361
Mississippi		134
Missouri		301
Montana	92	
Nebraska	188	
Nevada	65	9
New Hampshire	115	
New Jersey	287	15
New Mexico	121	
New York	282	
North Carolina	4	223
North Dakota	84	
Ohio	1	653
Oklahoma	42	117
Oregon	29	84
Pacific Areas	44	
Pennsylvania		524
Rhode Island	58	
South Carolina		96
South Dakota	156	33
Tennessee	144	
Texas	19	496
Utah		73
Vermont	102	
Virginia	162	
Washington	139	36
West Virginia	6	150
Wisconsin	69	138
Wyoming	54	

<u>PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Billy Ray Cameron		
John M. Carney		X
George Cramer		X
Robert Currieo	X	
Art Fellwock	X	
Robert Hansen - (Voted with Post)		
Walter Hogan - (Voted with Department)		
Cooper T. Holt - (Voted with Department)		
Richard Homan		X
Allen "Gunner" Kent (Voted with Department)		
James L. Kimery - (Voted with Department)		
Clyde Lewis - (Voted with Department)		
John Mahan		
Robert T. Merrill		

Clifford G. Olson - (Voted with Department)	
Eric Sandstrom	X
Joseph Scerra - (Voted with Post)	
R. D. Smith - (Voted with Department)	
Ray Soden - (Voted with Department)	
Paul A. Spera	X
Norman G. Staab - (Voted with Department)	
John Stang - (Voted with Department)	
John Staum - (Voted with Post)	
Howard Vander Clute, Jr. - (Voted with Post)	
Tom Walker - (Voted with Post)	
Robert E. Wallace - (Voted with Post)	

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: That concludes the roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We will have the votes as quickly as possible. My fellow comrades, as soon as these results are counted here, we are going to call it a day.

WINNERS OF INSURANCE DRAWING

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL RIDGLEY: May I have your attention, please. As we do every year, the insurance companies that we work with for our membership programs provide a drawing. You can put your name in the bucket over there. I am going to read those off quickly. There will be a drawing each day at the Convention.

The winners today are:

\$25 - Gary Brown, Post 4548, Arkansas

Jimmy Allison, Post 2572, Mississippi

\$50 - Donald Leach, Post 112, Kansas

Charles Edwards, Post 856, Texas

\$100 - Charles Mayer, Post 4075, Kentucky

Vernon Brundage, Post 9960, North Carolina

Congratulations. You can pick up your money over at the Insurance Booth in the Main Exhibit Hall.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Remember the Distinguished Guests Banquet is at 7:00 o'clock tonight. We expect a tremendous turnout, about 2,700 people. A reminder while we are waiting for the results of the vote, the Business Session will resume at 9:00 a.m., sharp tomorrow morning in Hall B. We will have some guest speakers and we will resume with the resolutions and will continue with our business. That is 9:00 o'clock a.m., tomorrow morning in Hall B.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, will we be considering anymore by-law amendments after the announcement?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: No. We are ready to announce the vote. May I have order, please.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Credentials

Committee has tallied the vote. The results are: 5,866 yes; 5,548 no. It failed to achieve a two-thirds vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Therefore, B-22, B-23 and B-26 are rejected.

Will the National Chaplain please come forward for the Benediction. All rise, please.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Bleiler gave the Benediction at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, please prepare the room to Salute the Colors.

(Whereupon, the assembly gave the Salute to the Colors.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: The Closing Ceremonies have been performed, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you. This session will be in recess until 9:00 o'clock a.m., in Hall B.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 3:50 o'clock p.m.)

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
AUGUST 18, 1997

(The Distinguished Guests Banquet of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, was called to order at 7:00 p.m., by Comrade Ben Russo, Chairman, Board of Directors, VFW 98th National Convention.)

COMRADE BEN RUSSO: May I have your attention. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Distinguished Guests Banquet for this, our 98th National Convention. As Chairman of the Board of Directors of this Convention, I want to extend to you a sincere welcome to Salt Lake City and the great state of Utah.

I sincerely believe that this banquet may be one of the highlights of this exciting Convention. We have a memorable program in store for you and we hope you enjoy the dinner and the program. Please stand as we join together in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

(Whereupon, the assembly gave the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.)

COMRADE BEN RUSSO: Please remain standing and I would like to call on Dr. William J. Bleiler, National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to give the Invocation.

Father Bleiler.

INVOCATION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN BLEILER: Heavenly Father, we come unto Thee in this moment of our Distinguished Guests Banquet of our 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We believe that Thou art our God and we are Thy people and Thou art the creator and sustainer of life.

We acknowledge that every good and perfect gift cometh from above. We have come from Thy divine province. We humbly invoke Thy blessings upon our celebration, our comrades and the food we are about to partake. Teach us, O God, to be always mindful and thankful of the loving kindness and tender mercies. Amen.

COMRADE BEN RUSSO: Thank you, Father. We may all be seated. I would still like your attention to make an introduction. I consider it a great pleasure to have the privilege of introducing to you a distinguished member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States who will serve as your Master of Ceremonies for the remainder of this evening.

John Moon was elected Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief at the 97th National VFW Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, on August 23, 1996. John joined the VFW in April, 1970, while serving the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam. He has served as the District Commander and County Council Advocate and at the Department level he has served as Chairman of the several Committees, including Legislation, Membership,

Vietnam Veterans, National Home, and the Ohio Caravan. He visits the Home every year.

He was an All-American Department Commander for the year 1987-1988, and was elected to the National Council of Administration in 1988. I am pleased to introduce to you our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Moon from the great state of Ohio. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Ben. To each and every one of you, ladies and gentlemen, comrades and sisters, I am most honored to be here this evening to serve as your Master of Ceremonies. We have a tremendous program this evening and we are pleased to have all of you here, somewhere in the neighborhood of 2,700.

It is the National Department and the local leaders at the VFW and Auxiliary levels. We are equally pleased to have our distinguished guests whom I am going to introduce to you after dinner. In the meantime, please enjoy the evening and enjoy your dinner. And for your dining pleasure, we know you will enjoy the music of the Joe Muscolino Band. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the dinner was served at this time.)

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Moon introduced the head table guests.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I am privileged this evening to introduce to you, a very special audience, the Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Since its founding some 98 years ago, the VFW has drawn together dedicated men and women who share the same concern and love for America and its veterans.

For the long and proud history of accomplishments, the VFW has always been in the forefront of every constructive program that is set forth to expand and protect the rights and privileges of the American veterans, whether it is an effort for a strong national defense or concerning veterans.

The VFW must have inspired leaders who will guide us. We have been most fortunate this year to have a man of this stature to guide us. He has had 16 years of active involvement in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Jim Nier has been a man on the move helping veterans in his community.

In keeping with his motto "Above and Beyond", he has worked hard to address the concerns and the mandates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and sisters, I am pleased to introduce to you a man dedicated to working for American veterans and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, our Commander-in-Chief from the great state of Texas, James "Jim" Nier.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thanks, everyone. Thank you, John, for that very warm introduction. My remarks tonight will be very brief. My comrades and sisters, I must tell you that you see standing before you a very proud person who for the last 12 months has had the wonderful

privilege of leading the greatest veterans service organization in the world, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Representing you around the country and around the world has been a most rewarding experience, one that I shall never forget. I have seen the results of the services for over two million VFW members and the 750,000 members of the Ladies Auxiliary.

In every town I visited, I saw a positive fruit that the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary are a dynamic force serving our nation's communities and our nation's veterans. This year has been a memorable year as the VFW worked to ensure that the veterans programs received proper funding.

It has been a year of challenge and as we have worked to maintain the integrity of the VFW health-care system. In responding to our "Above and Beyond" theme, we have supported our armed forces and the need to maintain a strong national defense. Tomorrow night at our VFW Patriotic Rally, we will reinforce that support when we recognize members of our armed forces.

I have visited our military men and women around the globe. I have been with them in Europe, in Kuwait and in South and North Korea. How proud I was to bring your message of support to our troops. That message was made all the more clear and meaningful with those wonderful VFW telephone calling cards. They are a visible sign of our support. The VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary are to be commended for this tremendous program.

In visiting Southeast Asia and Korea, the fate of our MIAs were always with me. The VFW will continue to lead the way in what we believe to be the best means of achieving our goal of the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs. We take our role seriously and we will continue as we monitor the progress and results in working with Vietnam and the other governments of the region to be of service to our members, to those missing and their families, and to do what this great organization stands for.

Your efforts and your support of every program that we have undertaken in the past year, whether it be in community and youth activities, Voice of Democracy, Post Development, Buddy Poppy or whatever, have proven that working together we can be successful. Yes, it has been a very special year for me, because I was proud to be with and serve with the finest men and women of our nation, its veterans.

Now, as my personal mission as your National Commander-in-Chief draws to an end, I wish to say once more on behalf of Kimie and me thank you for your hard work and support which truly went above and beyond. Thank you very, very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION
TO GENERAL JOHN SHALIKASHVILI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The head table guest,

distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: We are most honored this evening to present the Veterans of Foreign Wars' prestigious Dwight David Eisenhower Award to a man who is a great soldier and a great American, the thirteenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M. Shalikashvili.

In preparation for a distinguished career as the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense of the National Security Council, General Shalikashvili's long and dedicated service to the cause of national security and world peace was formulated at an early age when at eight, he and his family fled Poland at the westward advance of the Red Army. At 16, he came to the United States like many refugees, seeking a new life.

Upon graduation from officer's candidate school in 1959, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the artillery and for the next 28 years he served in a variety of command and staff positions in Alaska, the United States, Germany, Vietnam and Korea.

In 1987, he assumed command of the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Washington. In August, 1989, he was selected for promotion to lieutenant general and returned to Germany and assumed duties as Deputy Commander-in-Chief, United States Army, Europe and 7th Army.

In April of 1991, General Shalikashvili assumed command of Operation Provide Comfort, the relief operation that returned hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees to Northern Iraq, and in August of 1991, he returned to Washington, D.C., and became the Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Upon his promotion to General, he further distinguished himself serving as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and Commander-in-Chief, United States European Command from June, 1992, until October, 1993. General Shalikashvili is retiring next month after a distinguished military career that has contributed jointly to the cause of America's security, unity and world peace.

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and sisters, please join me in welcoming the recipient of the 1997 VFW Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili.

The citation you see behind me reads as follows:

"Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Medal and Citation presented to General John M. Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"In grateful recognition of your distinguished service as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and for your continuing contributions to the cause of national security, unity and world peace; and for providing outstanding leadership to our armed forces, thus earning the admiration and appreciation of the citizens of this nation.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 18th

day of August, 1997. Approved by the National Council of Administration.”

This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

General Shalikashvili, it is with a great deal of honor and pride that I present this prestigious award to you on behalf of the 2.1 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Applause)

RESPONSE AND PRINCIPAL ADDRESS GENERAL JOHN SHALIKASHVILI

GENERAL SHALIKASHVILI: To all of you and to your Chair, thank you so much for this great honor and for this wonderful, wonderful evening.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is certainly a great honor to receive the Veterans of Foreign Wars’ Dwight David Eisenhower Award for Distinguished Service. Of course, I will have to tell you that it is great to be here with you in Salt Lake City, for among other things that simply means that I am not back there in the Pentagon.

You know, after the war, General Eisenhower was called back to Europe to serve in the Pentagon. But for Ike, coming to grips with the size of that monstrous building, was a particular challenge. In later years, Ike was fond of telling his friends the story of the hapless Army Air Corps Captain, who came to the Pentagon right after it opened in 1943. I am sure some of you in the audience remember that day very well. The poor captain got so lost that by the time he reached his destination, at the other end of the Pentagon, he found out that he had been promoted to Bird Colonel.

But even today, there are lots of jokes about the Pentagon and how many people work there. A former Secretary of Defense, Secretary Weinberger, when asked how many people worked in the Pentagon, used to reply “about a third.”

Perhaps closer to the mark, a former Secretary of the Navy used to say that the Pentagon reminded him of a log floating rapidly downstream covered with 20,000 ants, each of them convinced that he was steering this log.

With that you will understand why I think it is so great to be away from the Pentagon and out here in God’s country and among friends and so many real heroes. My friends, let me say that as a man who came to our great country as a teenage refugee from worn-torn Europe, it is, in fact, a special thrill to receive a medal named for General Eisenhower, the leader of our “Crusade in Europe”, a great soldier and a great President.

It is also a great honor, because the Veterans of Foreign Wars’ two million members, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our armed forces, epitomize patriotism, sacrifice and all that’s good about America. So this prestigious award from this great organization is a very special honor indeed.

But if Ike were here today he would remind us that a General must accept such an award only in the name of the men and women under his

charge. So, with a great deal of humility, I accept this great honor on behalf of our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen, our Marines, our Coast Guardsmen, Active Guard Reserve, who every day lay it on the line for the greatest country in the world.

So, if you will permit me for the next few minutes, I would like to tell you about your armed forces and those outstanding men and women who are its life's blood. Let me start, first, with a bit of recent history. As I know you are well aware that since the end of the Cold War we have been able to safely cut our forces by 700,000 people, about a third of the active force.

I am not sure that you realize what 700,000 really is. If you were to take the forces, all of the armed forces of Great Britain, add to it the armed forces of Germany, the Netherlands and the Danish armed forces, you still wouldn't get the 700,000. Or to put it another way, the force we cut is about 200,000 people more than all of the auto workers in the United States.

In terms of combat structure, we have cut active Army Divisions from 18 to 10. The Air Force tactical fighter wings from 36 to 20. The number of ships in the Navy are down nearly 40 percent. By the way, the defense budget has gone down 40 percent as well.

And as an aside, today we spend less of a percentage of our nation's wealth on defense than at any time since before World War II. Now, in the past these deep cuts, which followed every war that we have ever had, always meant a dramatic down turn in the quality and the readiness of our forces.

Again, many of you here in the room remember those days. But I am happy to report to you that this time with sound leadership in the field, the support of the Congress, and the hard work of two different administrations, we have successfully managed a huge post-war draw down, creating a smaller but pound-for-pound an even more capable force.

It is a good thing that we did. Today, as we are all painfully aware, we also live in a world traumatized by ethnic conflicts, failed states and outbreaks of that rare but deadly virus: naked aggression. As a result, today's force has been one of the busiest in our peacetime history.

In just four years that I have been chairman, our forces have conducted nearly 50 different operations, some you have hardly ever heard of and others are as well known to you as anyone else, such as Bosnia. By the way, I just returned a few days ago from a trip to Bosnia. Thanks to our 8,000 troops there and the forces of our allies and partners, which, by the way, include a very effective Russian brigade, thanks to all of them we have stopped the killing which has made that country a living hell.

More importantly, today because of our troops, there is relative very little risk that war will once again be involved in Bosnia. I am sure all of you here tonight, especially you veterans of World War II, remember that for America, when it comes to wars in Europe, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. By that standard, our force in Bosnia has been

a great investment.

Let me pause here for a moment to say thank you to the VFW for supporting our troops in Bosnia and the Middle East, especially with those phone cards that we just referred to that you provided as part of your Operation Uplink. I cannot overstate how much they mean to the troops and to their families. From the bottom of my heart and from every service member who has been able to take advantage of those phone cards, thank you very, very much.

But today Bosnia is just one of our key operations. Today we are also in strength in the Persian Gulf where we keep a powerful naval battle group. In the skies of Iraq, where our valiant airmen enforce the U.N. sanctions against Saddam Hussein's regime and keep him from threatening its neighborhood and the world's oil supply.

And just recently our Marines, God bless them, have just finished another major non-combatant evacuation in troubled West Africa. All that is in addition to about 100,000 personnel in the European theater and another 100,000 sustained in the Pacific.

Our friends in trenches want our forces to stay for two key reasons. First and most obvious, is our power. Thanks in large measure to your sacrifices in years gone by, we are a global power today with global interests to protect.

While we stay overseas to protect our interests, wherever we are, we are also a positive force for peace and stability. Our friends know that, our former adversaries know that, and the outlaw nations and the terrorists who wish us ill, they know it, too.

But the second reason that our friends and allies value our presence overseas is our men and women in uniform. You know, when foreign generals come to the Pentagon to visit me, they speak with great admiration about our equipment, but they are in awe of our people, especially our young NCOs. If you could come with me on my travels and see the professionalism of these young men and women, you would be very extraordinary proud of them. One look into their eyes makes you proud to be an American.

I have seen that look just a few nights ago in the eyes of the remarkable sailors on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, named aptly enough, the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. Not long ago, I saw it in the eyes of the young Marines who had just rescued a downed Air Force fighter pilot. I have seen it just this past week in the compassion of Army National Guardsmen from the State of Georgia, who were repairing an orphanage in the faraway Republic of Georgia, in the former Soviet Union.

It is no mystery what inspires them, what sets them apart, for you see along with their professionalism and patriotism it is your accomplishments, your example and your legacy that inspires our men and women today. I thank you for that.

As President Clinton would so aptly say, "Today's men and women in uniform are the sons and daughters of your sacrifice." They are what

make ours the best danged armed forces in the world, bar none. But that said, it doesn't mean that everything in the armed forces today is perfect. It never was and today is no exception.

We all have seen on TV screens about the various problems, some acts of hazing, concern over gender integration and sexual misconduct. The media, by the way, loves those stories and, in fact, for some weeks here it was hard to tell the difference between news stories about our armed forces and the network soap operas.

Well, certainly these things are problems, serious problems, but they are not epidemics. Even though these social problems occur less in the military than in the civilian world, they are especially dangerous to our military. You see, they destroy the dignity of the individual, they damage morale, inhibit teamwork and does not get combat readiness. They are flat wrong and we will not tolerate it.

I can assure you that we will continue to address each wrong speedily, openly and fairly, protecting the rights of the person wronged and also protecting the rights of the accused. But while we do that, we will get on with the job at hand, protecting our interests wherever they might be challenged. That is why the readiness of our force is of concern to me.

While our readiness in the near term is fine, we are beginning to see some very early cracks, which if not fixed, could spell trouble. With a booming economy, enlistments are beginning to show signs of falling off and recruiting is becoming more difficult.

Our men and women in uniform, and their families, are finding it more challenging to keep up with the demanding tempo of rigorous training, frequent deployments and numerous ongoing operations.

I am confident that we have some good plans to right this situation, but readiness is one area where we will have to be especially watchful. This past spring we completed the Quadrennial Defense Review, an exhaustive study of the future and the kind of force that we will need in the challenging years ahead.

All indications are that for the next ten to fifteen years our forces in the field are likely to face the same wide range of threats that they face today from terrorists to rogue states equipped with weapons of mass destruction, to dangerous regional powers, such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Sometime beyond that power we may even face an emerging global power.

To deal with such a world, our armed forces must help shape the international environment by promoting regional stability, preventing conflicts and deterring aggression in key regions of the world. But if we fail to prevent conflicts, we must then be ready alone or with our partners to respond quickly and to fight and win in our nation's wars.

Finally, we will have to prepare our forces to deal with the security challenges of an unpredictable future. That means that tomorrow's force must have the new weapons and equipment that they will need to give them the quality edge of any future battlefield against any future adversary.

All of this is a very tall order, and we know that we will need your help to get the job done. First and foremost, we need the VFW to keep doing what it does so well, fighting for our veterans.

Not long after the founding of the VFW, Teddy Roosevelt said: "A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards." You and I have a deep responsibility to see that no veteran is ever to settle for anything less.

You see, that is important to me for our young service members watch very carefully what is happening to retiree and veterans' benefits. If you want to keep good people in the military today, it is imperative to give a "square deal" to those who have served so well in the past.

Another way the VFW can help the armed forces is in education. Veterans are wise but an aging breed. The median age of the World War II vet, I am told, is nearly 75. The median age of the Korean War vet is over 65, and those "young whippersnappers" of the Vietnam War era, their median age is over 50.

In effect, our population is losing military experience and the wisdom that comes along with it. If we are to have the best decision-makers possible, organizations like the VFW, we need to redouble their considerable efforts at educating the American people on national security issues.

That brings me to the third area where we need your help. We need you to continue to speak out about the importance of military preparedness and the importance of a strong armed forces.

The VFW has been a very sane and influential voice on national security issues to include most recently NATO enlargement and our policy on land mines. But with our population of vets getting smaller, your voice must get louder. Some of you out there have paid in blood for our lack of preparedness in the past. We cannot let that happen ever again.

For tomorrow, the key to keeping our armed force well prepared is people, quality men and women, the resources to train them and the experienced, well-educated leaders to make them all that they can be. I don't have to tell this audience, but in the urge to save money, we cannot balance the budget on the backs of our young men and women in uniform or on the backs of their families.

To remain strong, to remain the best military in the world, we need to continue to help our veterans, and the cooperation of Congress and the support of the American people. I know that we can count on the VFW to come through in these days. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, our nation approaches the 21st century from a position of great strength. We will never forget that it was you, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, who helped make us the best, the strongest nation on earth. Because of you, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we stand on the threshold of the second American century. Thank you for a magnificent job.

As for me, my time in uniform grows short. But in the months I

have left and in the years to come, I will look back on this day with pride. I will remember it as a day when standing here among old comrades, that I could conclude my time as a soldier and get ready to start my time as a veteran.

So, my fellow veterans, I salute you. I thank you for this great honor and may God bless you, and may God bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars and may God bless this great country of ours. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you very much, General. We are fortunate, indeed, that you have taken time from your busy schedule to be with us this evening. We are truly honored.

As I told the Secretary of the Army this morning at our Joint Session, we will continue to work in the areas that you have just addressed and I also wish to tell you, General, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will continue to strive to be the heroes and mentors of all the young men and women serving in your armed services. Thank you very, very much, General. (Applause)

I will now turn the program over to our MC for the evening, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Moon.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Nier. I would, too, like to thank the audience for coming, and to all of our honored guests that have been here.

I will now call on our Chaplain, William J. Bleiler, for the Benediction.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Bleiler gave the Benediction.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much and have a wonderful evening.

(Whereupon, the Distinguished Guests Banquet was concluded at 9:15 o'clock p.m.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 19, 1997

(The Second Business Session of the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier presiding.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We will call this Business Session to order. It is 9:00 a.m. I will ask the National Chaplain to please come forward with the Opening Prayer.

(Whereupon, the Opening Prayer was given by National Chaplain William Bleiler at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors.

(Whereupon, the National Sergeant-at-Arms led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. At this time I will have the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Richard Trombla, to come forward and give his report, please.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Chairman of the Credentials Committee from the Department of Kansas, Post 1174. This is a temporary report as of 8:00 o'clock this morning.

The total delegates, 11,999; Department Commanders, 53; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 27; total National Officers, 38. That makes a grand total of 12,117 as of this time, Commander-in-Chief.

INTRODUCTION OF MAJOR GENERAL JOHN P. HERRLING,
SECRETARY,
AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, will you, please, come in and find your seats. I am about to introduce our first distinguished guest speaker. Please find your seat so we can have order.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you see that is done, please.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The Veterans of Foreign Wars, which proudly includes one million World War II veterans among its membership, unanimously approved a Resolution at our National Convention in 1994 strongly supporting the establishment of a World War II Memorial in the District of Columbia to honor members of the armed

forces who served in World War II and to commemorate the participation of the United States in that war.

Last month, I appeared before the Commission of Fine Arts, one of the approving authorities, to urge the Commission to begin construction of this long overdue World War II Memorial.

We, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, are fully committed to fulfilling our mandated pledge to support this Memorial and what it stands for as expressed by the President during the site dedication ceremony on November 11, 1995.

The American Battle Monuments Commission, which was authorized by Congress in 1993 to establish a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., has maintained strict compliance with the applicable laws to see that this Memorial is appropriately located, designed and constructed.

This morning, I am pleased to introduce a fellow VFW member and good friend of the VFW, the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Retired Army Major General John P. Herrling.

Comrades and sisters, please give a warm VFW welcome to the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Major General John Herrling. (Applause)

REMARKS BY MAJOR GENERAL JOHN HERRLING

MAJOR GENERAL HERRLING: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to be here with you this morning. My purpose today is to brief you on the status of a memorial for the servicemen and women who served in World War II, and those on the home front that sacrificed to defend freedom and democracy during World War II.

I am the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, a federal agency given the responsibility by the Congress to build the World War II Memorial. My Commission is also responsible for the care and maintenance of 24 military cemeteries overseas, 20 in Europe, one in North Africa, one in Manila, one in Mexico City, and one in Panama.

The cemetery in Panama is run by Mr. Dannie Cooper, a member of your National Council of Administration. He does a great job. In these 24 military cemeteries rests 130,000 U.S. servicemen and women who died in the defense of our country. Approximately, 91,000 lay in rest in 14 World War II cemeteries.

The American Battle Monuments Commission is also responsible for the care and maintenance of 27 federal monuments, most of which are overseas. Together these memorials, cemeteries and monuments are among the most beautiful and well-maintained memorials in the world.

We had approximately nine million visitors to those memorials, cemeteries and monuments last year. Most are non-Americans. So, what I would ask you, when you are traveling abroad, check to see if there is an American military cemetery near where you are traveling.

A visit to one of our cemeteries is not only inspirational, it is a moving, emotional experience that you will never forget. The beauty of the architecture and landscaping and the endless rows of crosses and Stars of David will both fill you with pride and sorry.

The realization once again will be brought home that freedom isn't free. It is paid for with young lives and national treasures. If you have the opportunity, please visit one of your overseas military cemeteries.

Now, I would like to spend the next few minutes updating you on the World War II Memorial and the VFW's active involvement in this important national project. I want to personally thank the Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier for coming to Washington last month and testifying before the Commission of Fine Arts, one of the approving bodies for this memorial.

Jim Nier's presentation at that hearing was hard-hitting and convincing. It made it very clear to the chairman and the members of that Commission the importance of World War II to Americans across this country. In his remarks, your Commander-in-Chief said, "We, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, are fully committed to fulfilling our mandated pledge to support this memorial and what it stands for as expressed by the President. The time has come to move forward with building this national memorial."

Later he went on to say, "Mr. Chairman, speaking on behalf of the largest organization of overseas veterans, I respectfully urge the Commission to approve the design concept that is before you so that the orderly process of design development can proceed."

The Commission of Fine Arts was moved by his remarks, and at the end of the day they reaffirmed the Rainbow Pool site for the memorial. They also requested changes be made in the design concept. When it counted, your Commander-in-Chief was there with a strong and clear message. Jim, thanks very much for that great support.

One week later, Mr. Ken Steadman, the Executive Director of the Washington Office, appeared before the National Capital Planning Commission, the other Washington agency that must approve both the site for the memorial and its design. As Jim Nier had done a week earlier, Ken Steadman let the Commission know that the national leadership of the VFW and its membership across the country strongly supported the World War II Memorial site and the design.

Again, the message was strong and clear, and again at the end of the day the National Capital Planning Commission reaffirmed the Rainbow Pool site along with asking the American Battle Monuments Commission to make modifications to the design. Ken, the American Battle Monuments Commission wants to thank you for appearing on behalf of the VFW at that very important hearing.

Throughout this entire process, your National Adjutant General, Larry Rivers, has been working with me and my staff to orchestrate the VFW's support for the World War II Memorial. This is the tough behind the scenes work that pulls it all together. Larry, thanks for the great job you have done.

I can't tell you how important Jim Nier and Ken Steadman's testimonies were to these two committees, for there are those in Washington, D.C. who don't agree that the World War II Memorial should sit on one of Washington's most prominent sites.

There are those who strongly disagree with the design concept for the memorial. These people have a right to their views, but it is heartening to see that the real support for the Memorial is coming from Americans across the country, and the VFW is leading the way. (Applause)

So where are we today? The answer is we have the best site in Washington on which to build the World War II Memorial. It sits on the east-west axis of the National Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. We are back to the drawing board on the design concept, but we are not back to square one.

We will have to make some major modifications. This is not unusual for memorials or monuments in Washington, D.C. They all go through the same degree of scrutiny and modification. Henry Bacon's original design concept for the Lincoln Memorial was rejected. He went back to the drawing board and what emerged was a better design, the Lincoln Memorial that we know today.

Now, the American Battle Monuments Commission will go back to the drawing board and sometime this fall we will bring a revised design concept to both the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission. It will be a better design than what we have today. We will get it approved. In the meantime, we will continue the fund-raising efforts to raise the money necessary to build the Memorial.

Let me summarize by saying that the American Battle Monuments Commission is totally committed to the World War II Memorial and working hard to get it done before too much more time goes by. We will continue to need with the VFW's support.

You can help by writing your Senators and Congressional Representatives, reminding them that this country owes a great debt to the World War II generation, and you want their support for the World War II Memorial. At the states and local levels, you can encourage your governor and the members of the legislation to support the World War II Memorial by adopting special legislation in support of the Memorial.

Finally, I would ask each of you to communicate to your communities the importance of this Memorial and its legacy and lessons for future generations of America. The World War II Memorial is not just for Washington, D.C. It is a memorial for the entire country, and when it is all said and done this battle will not be won in Washington, D.C., it will be won by the voices of people in the cities and the community, the communities across the country.

But we need your help. We need you to join with a strong voice. You will be joining Senator Bob Dole and millions of other fellow veterans in very street across America, and you will be joining former Presidents Ford, Carter, Reagan and Bush, who in a letter asked Americans to support

a memorial which they said “will inspire future generations to carry on the legacy of those Americans who stepped forward when their country needed them.”

With your help and support, we will build a World War II Memorial and it will be a lasting tribute to an extraordinary generation of Americans. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you very much, General. You can be assured that you will have the support of this great organization as you establish this long overdue Memorial.

PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL AWARD TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER BY THE VFW POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Joining us at the podium this morning is a comrade who has been here many times before. Jack Carney was the 1992-1993 VFW Commander-in-Chief. His “Stand Up - Speak Out” year marked a major milestone in the history of our organization.

Today, he serves as the Chairman of the VFW Political Action Committee. Please join me in giving Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney of the great Department of Florida a very warm VFW welcome.

Chief. (Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Commander-in-Chief, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the PAC, I am pleased this morning to present to you a little gift in appreciation for your support, certainly your friendship, and how important you have been to us in making our decisions.

Realizing in your travels that you have received two huge eagles, which will be bookends, we have selected to give you a coin, an American eagle gold coin, gold bouillon of the American Eagle. I want to present this to you, Chief, and thank you very much for serving this organization through the PAC.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thanks, Chief. I want to thank Jack. Not only was he an outstanding Past Commander-in-Chief, or Commander-in-Chief, he is doing a tremendous job on the PAC Committee as well.

PRESENTATION OF “CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP” CITATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: At this time I would like to present a very special citation to the Department of Arizona. For 30 years, the members of the Department of Arizona have worked together as a team to increase VFW membership throughout the state. Each member of the Department of Arizona can take pride in their many years of dedication and hard work that went in to reaching this milestone.

Now in recognition of those efforts, I would like to call on Vincent J. Mitchell, the Past Department Commander of Arizona, to accept this “Consecutive Years of Membership Growth” citation with my thanks and appreciation.

Congratulations to the Department of Arizona. I want to read the citation. This is for 30 consecutive years of continued growth. “Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Certificate of Commendation presented to the Department of Arizona in recognition of 30 consecutive years of membership growth evidencing the attainment of three decades of continuous membership gain by the Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars.

“In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 19th day of August, 1997.” This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier and Adjutant General Larry Rivers. That is 30 years. Let’s give them a hand, folks. (Applause)

COMRADE VINCENT MITCHELL (Department of Arizona): I would just like to say that these past Department Commanders in the State of Arizona deserve a hand also, because if it wasn’t for them in the last 30 years we would not be receiving this award. Thank you, Arizona.

PRESENTATION OF VFW AMERICANISM AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO MR. JAMES K. KALLSTROM

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Ladies and gentlemen, beginning in 1959 the Veterans of Foreign Wars has presented the prestigious Americanism Award to an American who has made an outstanding contribution to our society and the principles of Americanism.

This year’s recipient is James K. Kallstrom, Assistant Director of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the FBI’s chief investigator into the crash of TWA Flight 800.

Despite speculation and theories as to the July 17, 1996, crash, Mr. Kallstrom has balanced his investigatory responsibilities and the need for public information with keen insight and judgment. With two agencies involved in the investigation, the FBI from a possible criminal or sabotage motive and the National Transportation Safety Board for Accident Investigations, Mr. Kallstrom has clearly defined for the American public the progress of the investigation and the responsibilities of the agencies involved, thereby exhibiting and practicing his, and that of the FBI, clear sense of civic responsibility.

Mr. Kallstrom’s extensive investigative experience, coupled with a keen sense of responsibility and a commitment in the public sector to assisting people in times of crisis, are in keeping with the highest standards and principles of Americanism.

Please welcome our 1997 VFW Americanism Award recipient, James K. Kallstrom. (Applause)

I would like to read the citation, please.

"Americanism Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to James K. Kallstrom in special recognition of his distinguished service to the nation as FBI Assistant Director in charge of the New York Division and Chief Investigator into the crash of TWA Flight 800. He balances his investigative responsibilities and the need for public information with keen insight and judgment, clearly defining the progress of the investigation and the responsibilities of the agencies involved for the American public, thereby exhibiting a clear sense of civic responsibility.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 19th day of August, 1997. Approved by the Council of Administration." This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Along with this is a \$1,500 honorarium. Mr. Kallstrom has requested the honorarium that accompanies this award be donated to the U.S. Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation.

RESPONSE - JAMES K. KALLSTROM

MR. JAMES KALLSTROM: Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for this very, very high honor. It is a tremendous tribute to me and my family. I would like to introduce Susan, who is standing here, Crystal and Erica. As we all know, we can do nothing without our team and without our family, who certainly is the principal part of that team.

Thanks to Jim Nier, the National Council and Ken Steadman, and to his very, very competent staff. It has been my pleasure dealing with them. Thanks mostly to all of you out there and the thousands and thousands of great Americans from the VFW that couldn't be here. You are a wonderful, wonderful organization.

It has been a tremendous pleasure for my family and myself to be here with you these last few days, to be with the backbone of America, to be with what America is all about. I want you to know how much I appreciate that. You know, we live in a very different world than we lived in just ten years ago.

That is just one decade ago, since the fall of the Soviet Union. We see chaos around the world. General Shalikashvili talked about it last night. We see acts of terrorism. In the United States, we have seen the World Trade Center, the conspiracy by the Blind Sheik and his co-conspirators to blow up the FBI building and the tunnels in the United Nations.

We have seen the fellow named Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and his co-conspirators fly into the Philippines to down eleven American flag carrying jumper jets as they transmitted the Pacific rim back to the United States. So in a lot of ways the new order, supposedly the new world order, is actually

a much more challenging time for us in the defense of this country, for us in law enforcement.

It will be more important in the future, not less important. It will be more important for the leadership, for the teamwork, for professionalism, for integrity and, yes, for character. Character does count. All of you represent that so well and I thank you for that.

It was an honor for me leading the investigation of TWA Flight 800, I was one man thrust into the spotlight to try to explain that tremendous tragedy. Whatever the result eventually is, believe me, it was a tragedy to be with the families of 230 people, people who have lost their children, their wives, their husbands, their parents. That is an immense tragedy.

For us in law enforcement, it galvanizes the reason why we have come to work in one. We don't ever want something like that to ever, ever happen again. I can tell you briefly about the wonderful team, and it was a lot more than the FBI and the NTSB.

The Coast Guard played an incredible professional and heroic role. That evening, ten miles off the coast of a little town called Moriches, Long Island, young Guardsmen and Coast Guardswomen, 18, 19, 20 years old, patrolled in their boats and went to the scene diving into 18 to 20 feet high waves on the ocean looking for survivors. They were heroes in every sense of the word.

The Navy did an incredible job picking up from the bottom of the ocean under very, very difficult situations the 130 feet of water, three or four feet of visibility, the once proud jumbo jet with 160,000 pieces with miles and miles of cable dangling in some eerie tragic scenario.

They put their lives on the line. How dare Pierre Salinger to say the Navy was responsible for this. What a fool. The Navy was the heroes of this operation. Every day in my job, 28 years in the FBI, proceeded by close to four years in the Marine Corps, every day I use what I learned in the military.

There is nothing more important in my view than national service. You know, in a lot of ways with DOD, what the military does and what law enforcement does is sort of blending together. You know in this age of nuclear proliferation, it is an unfortunate age, this age of chemical warfare, biological warfare, and we have seen this.

We saw what was going on in Iraq after Desert Storm. We saw so-called religious cults in Japan put gas into the Tokyo subway system and have enough base chemical to make enough gas to kill almost everybody in the world. This is a different time and law enforcement and the military now play almost an entire role of defending not only our national security but our public safety.

So in a lot of ways you are friends, you are associates, you are comrades in law enforcement. We are in the same band of brothers with all of you and all of us that proudly have served in the United States military.

So on behalf of all the people in the FBI, all of the wonderful

dedicated members of the law enforcement teams, the federal agencies, all the wonderful dedicated law enforcement team of the state and local agencies, I humbly accept this award on their behalf.

I thank you all very, very much for the brotherhood, the sisterhood, the warmth, the patriotism. I think your sign up there says it all. It says it all about you: "We'd do anything for this Country." You are a wonderful important part of this country. You are the backbone of this country. So be proud. Do what you do and do it well. God bless all of you and thank you very, very much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE HERSHEL GOBER - ACTING SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: For your information, Mr. Kallstrom is a former Marine, a Vietnam veteran, and we are going to see that he will become a Life Member in our great organization.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am most pleased to introduce to you a man who truly understands what veterans service means.

This month President Clinton nominated Hershel W. Gober to be Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Gober has served as VA's Deputy Secretary since February 4, 1993, and as Acting Secretary upon the resignation of former Secretary Jesse Brown on July 1.

Mr. Gober is well known in the veterans community and brings a wealth of experience from his job as the Chief Operating Officer of the federal government's second largest department.

Prior to coming to the VA, Mr. Gober served as Director of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs. In 1992, he received the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs' Annual Melvin T. Dixon Award in recognition of his work as the nation's most effective State Director.

A veteran who retired from the military after a career with the Marine Corps and the Army, Secretary-Designate Gober served two tours of duty in Vietnam. He received numerous military decorations, including the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

With a commitment to serving all veterans and with his clear message that our veterans will not be forgotten, I am pleased to introduce a friend and VFW Life Member of Post 4515, Monticello, Arkansas, the Secretary-Designate of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Hershel W. Gober.

Let's give him a warm VFW welcome. (Applause)

ADDRESS - THE HONORABLE HERSHEL GOBER

VA SECRETARY-DESIGNATE GOBER: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Nier. Adjutant General Rivers, Auxiliary President, Distinguished Officers of the VFW, Comrades, Honored Guests, Ladies and

Gentlemen:

Commander-in-Chief Nier, if you will permit me, I am from Arkansas and we in Arkansas all have an old saying, "We always dance with them what brung us." So the Arkansas delegation, where are you? Also where is the New Hampshire delegation?

I thank everybody that supported me and have been so great, but these folks here, "they brung me." I will always be loyal to them and always appreciate their support as well as that of submitting more so many others out there who have been supportive over these past few years.

I want you to know without your support of you as individuals and of this great organization that I would not be standing here in front of you today. For that, I am profoundly grateful and always will be. Thank you.

You know, I am glad to be away from Washington, because it is good to get out here where the real people are and, in fact, people that can understand when I talk to them and they know what the real issues are affecting this country. But there are a lot of people in Washington that, as General Shalikashvili said last night, he talked about the Pentagon, but he could really talk about Washington.

There are people there who think they are so indispensable. Of course, those of us that remember when Truman removed McArthur, we know nobody is indispensable. If anybody ever was, we thought it was General McArthur. I will run into these people who think they are so important, and my daddy always told me, "Son, take your job very seriously, but do not take yourself too seriously."

I am really reminded of a story of an event that occurred back in Arkansas. I live in a small place called Monticello, and I live outside there in a place called Possum Valley. It has got one sign and on both sides it says, "Entering Possum Valley," and you drive right through it.

It goes back to the days when they were founding the place, there were a lot of possums there, and that is what they ended up eating, so they called it Possum Valley. I was driving through the country there, and I drove by this farm and on this farm was a pig out in the yard, and it had a wooden leg on one of his hind quarters. That made me curious.

So I stopped and I asked the farmer, I said, "Pardon me, sir, but why does your pig have a wooden leg?" He said, "Well, son, that is a very courageous pig." He said, "My wife and I were asleep one night when a fire started, but that pig rushed upstairs and woke us up. The whole house burned down, but we were able to get out."

I said, "Well, that is how the pig got the wooden leg, the leg burned off in the fire?" He said, "Nope, in fact, the pig got out just fine. As a matter of fact, he even went back upstairs and got the kids out of the house, too." I said, "Well, why does your pig have a wooden leg?" He said, "Boy, with a pig like that, you don't eat it all at one time." So I guess no one is really indispensable.

You know, I like to think about the time the VFW, and I am the Past Department Adjutant from the State of Arkansas and I know the importance

of Adjutants. It is like the time when the Chaplain, the Adjutant General and the Executive Director of the VFW, they were all out fishing.

They were in this boat on this lake and the Chaplain suddenly remembered that he left his fishing gear in the car. So not wanting to disturb anyone else, he just stepped out of the boat and walked across the water and went to the car and got his fishing gear, and went back and got in the boat and started fishing.

Well, the Executive Director suddenly remembered that he got hungry and left his lunch in the car, so he stepped out of the boat and walked out to the car and got his lunch, and came back and sat on the boat. Well, the Adjutant General, not wanting to be outdone and realizing he had to take a walk, stepped over the boat and went straight to the bottom.

The Chaplain started laughing, and he turned to the Executive Director and he said, "Do you think we should have told him about the rocks?" The Executive Director said, "What rocks?" (Laughter)

I am pleased to visit with you here. I will try to be brief. You know, it has been four and one-half years since Jesse Brown and I arrived at the VA as a team. We arrived with an agenda. Our agenda was to give the Department of Veterans Affairs back to the people that it is supposed to serve in this country.

We formed a partnership with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the other veterans organizations, and in this past four and one-half years we have seen unprecedented changes in the way that benefits are delivered to the veterans of this country. We owe a great deal to Secretary Brown for his leadership and for doing the right thing for veterans.

I want to pledge to you, as Jimmy Durante used to say, "You ain't seen nothing yet." We are going to move on and make sure that veterans are never forgotten in this debate in this country about how to spend its money or who we owe something to.

The veterans groups in this country have a seat at the table on policy development. We don't make decisions in the back room at night. We have meetings and we sit down and we talk to the veterans leaders, and we get their input and we make these decisions together.

I will be honest with you, over the past four and one-half years, with some of the problems we have had with the budget and a lot of the attacks on the department, it has not been easy. The VFW has stood right there in the forefront. They have assumed a position of leadership.

Without the support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we could not have made the progress that we have made. I am proud of what we have done. We have expanded benefits for veterans exposed to Agent Orange, radiation, mustard gas and for former prisoners of war.

We have effective programs for women veterans that we have neglected for so long. We have stronger outreach efforts, post-traumatic stress disorders, and veterans suffering from PTSD, and homeless vets.

The Persian Gulf vets are receiving medical care and compensation. You know, we made a decision that we are not going to let

the Persian Gulf illness become another Agent Orange and wait 20 to 25 years to take care of the veterans. That is why two years ago we pushed legislation that was passed by Congress and signed by the President that lets us compensate these men and women who served their country for undiagnosed illnesses.

That is the first time in history it has ever happened. We are extremely proud of that. Our backlogs, we have worked on our backlog but we have not made enough progress.

In my speech here, the speech writers say I intend to reduce all the processing time for most claims, I intend to cut it in half in three and one-half years. My speech writers evidently have not gotten my message, because I intend to cut it by 90 percent in three and one-half years.

Now, having said that, it is going to be very difficult. You know the medical system is off and running and is headed in the right direction, but we have not made enough progress on it, and I am going to be working with the people in the VA and working with the veterans service organizations to find ways that we can reduce the processing time.

On health care, I know there is a lot of concern within this audience and within veterans. Veterans, you know, are so afraid they are going to lose another entitlement. You and I both know, we have watched it happen over the years and we have watched the erosion, any time that you try to do something different it scares us veterans.

That is okay. That is the way it should be. We should be watching. But I want to assure you that in the mergers and the integrations, the thing that we are doing is not going to decrease the care you get, it is going to increase the care you get. You have got my pledge on that.

We are not going to decrease the care that any veteran is receiving now; we are going to increase the care. I am not in the business of closing, I am in the business of opening up outpatient clinics, more access points for veterans so they don't have to drive 200 miles, so they don't have to sit in a waiting room and wait for hours and hours and hours, so they don't have to wait for 45 minutes or two hours to get a prescription. I want to tackle those things.

Those are the things that you care about. It is very simple. My job is easy. I have three areas that I am concerned with. One of them is quality health care. The other one is delivery of benefits and the other is burial. That is my mission.

I have no other mission, except to make sure that veterans receive the care that they are entitled to. I pledge to you that we will continue to work on this and I don't want you to be upset. Don't listen to the rumors. Don't listen to the gossip.

If you want an answer, you come to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They can give you the answer, because they know what we are doing with our system. They are well aware of what we have got to do to make it to survive. Make no mistake about it.

If we had not started making some of the changes we are making

right now about three and one-half years ago, we would be in the business of closing hospitals, we would be in the business of downsizing, because we wouldn't have had the money to operate.

Thankfully, we began downsizing. We have cut our staff in Washington. We have cut our administrative people. The things that we are consolidating and merging, there is no reason to have two laundries in one town when you have got one that could do it.

It is not necessary to have two supply operations when one can accommodate both. I want to take the money we would save from doing those things and put back in the hospitals to take care of veterans. Let people take care of veterans. I want to open up outpatient clinics.

I want to do the things that the VA should be doing. If you will work with us on this, like I say, the best way to kill a rumor about something is going to close or this is going to happen, or that is going to happen, is to contact us. You can also contact your VFW. They know all about what is going on, because we work very closely.

Also, I want to pledge to you that we are going to begin writing our letters in common sense language. You know, about three years ago I was visiting one of our facilities. I was walking through it and I stopped by the office where the service officers are located.

There were two couples in there. I stepped in and I said, "Can we help you?" This one guy said, "All I want is somebody to tell me what this letter says." The other guy said, "I would like you to tell me what mine says." There were two very confused veterans in that room.

So I said that I could read a little bit. I was in the Marine Corps. Then when I learned how to read and write, I was in the Army. Now, I wouldn't advise any of you other folks that are not former Marines to say those kinds of things. It could be hazardous to your health.

Anyway, I said, "Let me see if I can read this for you." I picked the letter up and I read it. There were two confused guys in that room but when I finished reading it there were three confused guys. So what I want them to do is to write a letter to the veteran that says if you want your benefits, here is what you have to give us.

I want them to write a letter that says you have an appointment with Dr. Jones at 10:00 o'clock at building so and so, and bring this with you and bring that with you. You know, this is just plain old simple ordinary language. We, in the military, used to have an acronym for that, and one was KISS: "Keep it simple, stupid."

That is the way I want us to do it. I don't want you to write and talk about Title 38, CFR, and all kinds of stuff. They don't care about that. The veterans want to know what do I need to do and where do I need to go and when do I need to do it? Tell me simply what I need to do. Don't give me some legal jargon. So we are going to do that and we will call it writing for real people. Veterans are real people.

I am skipping about half of my speech. That is what I am doing actually. I knew you would appreciate that. You know, our budget this

year, when the budget talks first started, and I know there is still a lot of concern among this organization, because this organization has been out there on the forefront trying to make sure that veterans receive their fair share of the budget.

They have done a great job in doing that. When we first heard about it, it was going to reduce our VA discretionary care, which is the medical care across the country, by \$273 million. But the appropriators put it back in, and they give us a little bit more.

Now, it is going to be tight, but we think we can operate because we said we want to bring in additional dollars. We have always said, you know, veterans will give. The veterans have always said, "Sure, we will take our part of the cuts if you cut everybody else."

So often they wanted to single out the veterans and we didn't like that, and we have always said, as was said last night by General Shalikashvili, we want the budget balanced, but we don't want it balanced on the back of our men and women in the military or the veterans. We certainly don't think that the veterans deserve that. We fought for that as this organization has.

One thing we are proud about is we get to keep the medical care cost of recovery. That is the insurance checks that we collected in our hospitals out there, about \$630 million last year. Now that we get to keep it, I think we will collect more.

That means that your hospital out there, when it collects this money from a third-party reimbursement, insurance companies, et cetera, that money is going to stay there in your hospital and they are going to use it to put in things like more outpatient clinics, to treat more veterans in the hospitals.

We have eligibility reform now. All we need is money, and we can do what we have always wanted to do, which is to let every veteran that wants to come to the VA hospital to be treated there. Give them that option. So, with the medical care cost of recovery we will be able to do that.

The way this thing works is that up until this legislation passed, we collected this money and then we gave it to the Treasury. In other words, we were collecting money for the Treasury, passed it right through and not getting to keep anything except the administrative costs, which were about 18 percent of the collections.

It is kind of like the two old boys down in Arkansas that went into business. They were buying pumpkins. They were paying 50 cents apiece for the pumpkins and they were putting them in a pickup truck and hauling them all the way to Little Rock, a hundreds miles, and they were selling them for fifty cents apiece.

After a couple of weeks, old Bob told Bill, "You know, I have been thinking about this. Something is wrong. We are not making any money." He said, "We buy them for fifty cents and we are selling them for fifty cents." Bill said, "Yeah, but I got this thing figured out. Next week we are going to get us a bigger truck."

Now, that is kind of where we were with the veterans medical care cost of adjustment. We were collecting money but not getting to keep it. But now we are getting to keep it.

Another thing we are going to continue fighting for you is Medicare. You should be able to take our Medicare to any hospital you want to, including the VA. Right now the only people in America who are being discriminated against, when it comes to using this Medicare money anywhere they want to take it, is the military retirees and veterans.

Of course, military retirees are veterans. That is not right. If anybody in this country deserves a right to take their Medicare dollars to a VA hospital that they are perfectly happy with, or to a military hospital they are happy with, they should be allowed to do that. It makes common sense.

In Little Rock, for example, the VA Hospital in Little Rock is connected to the University of Arkansas Medical Center. When a veteran gets to be 65 years old, they are out of the VA Hospital, they can't bring their Medicare money to us.

That veteran has got a VA Hospital there that he is very happy with or she is very happy with. They can't spend their money there, but yet they can walk right across a little connecting corridor, the same building, to the University of Arkansas Medical Center, and they can take Medicare.

Somebody tell me what is the reason on that? It doesn't make sense, and we are going to continue fighting for it. We have got some friends in Congress that are on our side on this, too.

With our budget, we are going to be able to treat 3.1 million veterans, which is an increase of over 135,000 this year. You know, people say that the VA is folding down. Folks, at this very moment as we talk, we are treating more patients, more veterans than we have ever treated before in our history.

We are doing it in more cities, we are doing it more economically, and the quality of the care is better than it has ever been. Now, having said that, I know that you are sitting out there, many of you have VA Hospitals that you swear by, that you think they are the greatest in the world and you love the people and you love the doctors.

Some of you out there may have problems. I will be the first to tell you that, yes, there are still places where there are problems, but we are honing in on those problems. The new performance measures that we have put in, the way we are monitoring these hospitals and the way we are monitoring the care that we do, surveys we are doing, working with our shareholders and people that use our facilities, we are narrowing it down.

We are focusing in on the places where we do have these problems and we will be glad to address them. I am concerned about waiting time performances. I stopped by a pharmacy in Washington, D.C., about two weeks ago to pick up a prescription. It was just for my allergies.

I never had to take this until I went to Washington, D.C. I have got it figured out. It is all that stuff in the air up there that makes you have

allergies. I stopped by to get a prescription. I walked in, and I am the only person in the pharmacy.

I walked up to the counter, and the guy kept shuffling his papers, and he finally looked up and he said, "Can I help you?" I felt like saying, "Yeah, I would like to have my shoes shined." What am I doing at the pharmacy? I want a prescription. I gave him my prescription.

He looked at it and said, "When do you want to pick it up?" I am looking around and there is no one. "I would like to get it right now." "Oh, no, it will be an hour." I said, "Well, you have got one less prescription to fill." I took it away and I went somewhere else.

Customer service, if you want my business you are going to have to treat me right. That is what we want to do in our VA Hospitals. Our people have to realize, and I tell them when a veteran walks in this hospital, remember, that is a member of my Board of Directors and your Board of Directors.

I have 26.5 million members on the Board of Directors because I work for every one of you. Every one of you out there are my boss. I know that. I want our people to understand that because, you see, when we really get rolling here and we are collecting this money and we are treating more veterans, the only way we can do that is make sure that they are satisfied, because you don't have to come to me. You can go somewhere else.

I want you to want to come to the VA. I don't want any of those people out there disrespectful to you. I don't want them to do that. I want to move them in other jobs and I want them to go someplace else where they will not be in contact with veterans.

I want them to understand when that older veteran walks in, that veteran that is bent over and stooped, he is gray, I don't want them to see that older veteran. I want them to look deep in the eyes of that veteran and I want them to see that 19-year-old Navy guy who drove the landing craft ashore at Omaha Beach. I want them to see that 19-year-old Ranger who stormed the shores in Normandy. I want them to see the Marine who was in Iwo Jima.

I want them to see the nurse that cared for those young men that fell and not see that older woman there. I don't want them to see those bent bodies. I want them to see that Marine that made the march out of Chosen. I want them to see when that wheelchair pulls up there, I want them to see that young Marine or that young soldier who walked through the jungles of Vietnam.

I want them to see that these are not just a bunch of old people. These are the people that made this country what it is. These are the people that gave us the freedom and gave me the freedom to stand in front of this great audience today and have this great job I have got, and the opportunity to serve you.

I especially want them to understand what the World War II veteran means. I grew up with you guys and you will always be my heroes.

When I was small, when the war started, my dad closed up the farm in Arkansas, my two brothers enlisted in the military.

They were shipping out in Oakland, San Francisco. We closed up and my dad moved out there and went to work in the shipyard, and my sister went to work in the shipyard. We stayed there until the war was won. I remember so many of you, I remember when you were young.

I think one of the most touching things that I ever heard was when the President went to Normandy, D-Day, and one of the greatest lines that sticks in my mind, and I will have to paraphrase it, but he said, you know, their backs are stooped, their body is frail and the gait is a little slower than they used to be, and their ranks are fastly thinning, but when they were young they saved the world.

I want you to know that I will never forget that, the fact that I can stand here on this stage and speak the English language. That is not what the people that were fighting planned for us in World War II. They already put out the money that they were going to spend in the United States. Unfortunately you guys wouldn't cash your checks. I am forever profoundly grateful for that.

For those of my brothers who served in Korea, you know, we are going to have a great celebration of the anniversary of that war. You will no longer be forgotten. My brothers and sisters who served in Vietnam, thank you for being so vocal because the fact you were so vocal and wouldn't go away has served all those that came before you and all those that came after you in a very good manner. We wouldn't go away, we Vietnam veterans.

I remember some of my buddies in World War II used to call us whiners and criers. But let me tell you what we whiners and criers did. We have made America recognize that there is such a thing as post-traumatic stress disorder. We are not only treating in our medical centers Vietnam veterans, we are treating World War II and we are treating Korean veterans, and we are treating other veterans.

We also wouldn't go away on the Agent Orange issue. We kept pushing, we kept pushing. Finally, we recognized it was something wrong with spraying that stuff on us over there. We are serving the Persian Gulf veterans well, also. Those veterans who served in the Persian Gulf, I want to assure you we will not rest until we know what is wrong with you and we can answer your questions.

In closing, I want to tell you that it is a great honor to stand here in this hall. I was in Las Vegas on Sunday and I spoke to the Disabled American Veterans. I was in this great big hall. It was the anniversary of the death of Elvis on Saturday, but that was on Sunday.

I make this last remark, and I would like to say this to my friends from Arkansas and my other friends out there, "I finally made it to the big room." Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Mr. Gober. I want to

tell you before you leave, Mr. Secretary-Designate, the Veterans of Foreign Wars will be in the forefront to make sure that Congress doesn't vote against veterans. You know where we stand on Medicare expansion.

SECRETARY-DESIGNATE GOBER: Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE J. EDGAR HOOVER AWARD,
GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I am pleased to present the J. Edgar Hoover Award for outstanding service in the field of law enforcement to an outstanding police officer from the City of New Orleans. Officer Philibert has been honored by the New Orleans City Council and other civic organizations for his service and dedication to duty.

These police officers are truly representative of the dedicated men and women who serve our communities and the nation in the field of law enforcement.

He received the city's Medal of Lifesaving for responding to a call for assistance last July. A van traveling at a high rate of speed had collided with five other vehicles. Seeing that three of the vehicles were engulfed in flames and with people scrambling out of two of them, Officer Philibert could see hands waving in the third car which was now filled with thick black smoke.

Crawling up on the hood of one of the cars, he could see a man and a woman with the flames rapidly spreading toward the couple. As he got close, the intense heat shattered the windows.

Despite great danger to himself, Officer Philibert grabbed the woman's arms in an attempt to pull her out. He realized her skin was already badly burned and that she was still strapped in her seat belt. Although in a bad state, the woman was still conscious enough that Officer Philibert finally made her understand that she had to release her seat belt. With other officers pulling him, he managed to pull the woman out through the passenger window by her hair.

Suffering burns to his hands, arms and face, Officer Philibert turned back to rescue the man who had managed to free himself and was partially out of the vehicle. Unfortunately, the fuel tank ruptured and exploded, engulfing the man in flames and making any rescue attempt futile.

Officer Philibert's dedication to duty, coupled with his heroic deeds, have earned him the respect of his colleagues and are in keeping with the finest traditions of the law enforcement profession.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to our 1997 VFW J. Edgar Hoover Award recipient, Police Officer Russell Philibert of the New Orleans Police Department. (Applause)

I would like to read the citation. "J. Edgar Hoover Award, Gold Medal and Citation, awarded to Officer Russell Philibert in special recognition of his outstanding service, professionalism, bravery and knowledge in the field of law enforcement which has earned for him the

respect of his peers and the admiration of the citizens of New Orleans, Louisiana.

“In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 19th day of August, 1997. Approved by the National Council of Administration.”

This has been signed by me, James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General. Congratulations. Along with that is an honorarium for \$1,500.

REMARKS - MR. RUSSELL PHILIBERT

MR. PHILIBERT: I just want to express to you veterans that I appreciate the award, especially for myself and the New Orleans Police Department, and the 6th District where I work. The knowledge of the police work is passed down to all of us by the veteran police officers. I will continue to protect the services of New Orleans and America. Thank you.

I would like to give special thanks to Ms. Ruth Aslin, the police officer who is our coordinator, and for her efforts with the police work and the investigation. I didn't have time to put the paperwork together to make this trip. I had a great journey to Salt Lake City. I would like to thank the Louisiana crowd, Lafayette. Thanks for all your support, Lafayette. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW EMERGENCY SERVICES AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Annually, the Veterans of Foreign Wars presents its Emergency Services Award to an individual for outstanding contributions to the community in the field of Emergency Services.

This year we are pleased to present this year's award to a man who has dedicated his life to serving the community.

Sergeant John Taylor, Director, Search and Rescue, Snohomish County, in the State of Washington, manages and coordinates the efforts of 180 volunteers and all search and rescue in an area that includes the Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains with glacier peaks rising to 10,000 feet.

Throughout a distinguished career which included numerous dramatic rescues, Sergeant Taylor has established a world-renowned reputation for his expertise and received in 1996 the Washington State Department of Transportation Search and Rescue Award.

Since 1990, Sergeant Taylor has been responsible for 551 missions searching for more than 1,000 individuals.

Sergeant Taylor joined the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office in 1968, the day after which he left the Army after service in Vietnam, which included duty as a door gunner on Huey helicopters.

Sergeant Taylor's deeds, dedication and experience in the field of

search and rescue over the past 24 years exemplify the deeds and sacrifices of those of the emergency services who serve our communities across the nation.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to Sergeant John L. Taylor, the 1997 recipient of the VFW Emergency Services Award.

Once again I would like to read the citation, my fellow comrades.

“Emergency Services Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Sergeant John L. Taylor in special recognition of his distinguished career as Director, Search and Rescue, Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office and in sincere appreciation for his selfless and dedicated service directing over 551 missions, utilizing 61,554 personnel hours in rescue activities for Puget Sound to the Cascade Mountains, which resulted in the search for or rescuing of 1,159 individuals.

“In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 19th day of August, 1997. Approved by the National Council of Administration.”

This has been signed by myself, James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Congratulations, Sergeant Taylor.

RESPONSE - SERGEANT JOHN L. TAYLOR

COMRADE JOHN TAYLOR: Well, here I am. I can’t believe this. It is hard sometimes to accept something like this when you are doing it because that is something you really want to do. That is what I have been doing all my life. Well, pretty much what I wanted to do.

I first got involved in the search and rescue when I was 17 years old. I helped a woman that had a broken leg and I felt good about it. So I told myself I have got to find a job where I can get paid to do this. I did. I have been working at it ever since.

I have worked as a volunteer for many years, and then I worked as a Deputy Sheriff, and then eventually became in charge of operations for the Sheriff’s Office. I not only help the people of Snohomish County, I go all over. Any place where they can use any assistance in setting up programs or things of that nature, I will do it.

I really believe in what I am doing. I am very proud to be a Vietnam veteran. I am a Life Member of VFW Post 2100 in Everett, Washington. I really respect and appreciate the VFW as a whole, all the good things they do, especially for the young people.

You know, to me, I work with young people, too. When I can get a high school age person, instead of wanting to go play video games, who wants to go up and rescue people, I think he is going to be a better citizen. It is really gratifying to me to be involved in that. That is what you all are, too.

Again, I want to thank you for this award. Thank you once again.
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Along with this award and citation comes an honorarium in the amount of \$1,500. Would you like to introduce your folks that you have brought with you today?

COMRADE JOHN TAYLOR: I have the Assistant Director for Emergency Services for Snohomish County, Maxine Henderson. She is a Veterans of Foreign Wars member. I have Rhonda Anderson and Ron Stint from our honor guard. They wanted to make sure I got here.

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S SPECIAL AWARD
TO MR. WILSON SMITH,
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEDAL OF HONOR MEMORIAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: One of our very own VFW comrades comes before us now to receive the VFW Commander-in-Chief's Special Award. Wilson K. Smith, Jr., served in the United States Army, 101st Airborne. He came home from Vietnam with a Silver Star and a Bronze Star. Back from the war, he began a project that has taken almost 30 years to complete. It is a memorial to the 85 African-American heroes who have received the Medal of Honor.

Dedicated in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1991, this beautiful memorial recognizes the heroic duty of African-Americans from the Civil War to the Vietnam War. In January of this year, a replica of the memorial was placed in the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., to take its place beside other memorials honoring those who have served our country.

A man who has truly gone above and beyond in honoring his fellow servicemen, please welcome one of our very own VFW members from VFW Post 2765, Wilmington, Delaware, Wilson K. Smith, Jr. (Applause)

I would like to read this special award. "Commander-in-Chief's Special Award presented to Wilson Smith, Jr.

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States salutes you for the vision of the African-American Medal of Honor Memorial and commends you for the tenacity and dedication to see it to its fruition.

"August 19, 1997, James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief." (Applause)

REMARKS BY COMRADE WILSON SMITH, JR.

COMRADE WILSON SMITH: I am very proud of this award, and I thank you all for having me here. This award is not for me, it is for the 85 African-Americans who proved themselves in this country that they love it, and it was worth dying for. I am here today because the VFW realizes what I was trying to do and brought me here to show that we, the Vietnam veterans, will take care of our own. God bless the VFW and the United States of America. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I wish to tell you that your VFW donated \$5,000 to make that memorial in the Pentagon become a reality.

We thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL CLAUDE M. KICKLIGHTER,
DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY OF THE ARMY
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Ladies and gentlemen, in three years we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. In an effort to recognize our Korean War veterans, their families and to provide the American public with a clear understanding and appreciation of the lessons and history of the Korean War, we are fortunate to have with us Lieutenant General Claude M. Kicklighter, the Deputy Undersecretary of the Army for International Security Affairs and formerly the Executive Director of the 50th Anniversary of World War II Commemorative Committee.

General Kicklighter and the Committee did a marvelous job. With preparations underway, it is fitting that we prepare to honor and recognize those who set the stage for America's determination at the start of the Cold War and whose service and sacrifices eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

I am confident that under General Kicklighter's leadership and with the support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, this commemoration of the Korean War and its veterans will be a memorable one.

Please join me in a warm VFW welcome for a good friend of the VFW and a valued Life Member, Retired Army Lieutenant General Claude M. Kicklighter. (Applause)

General Kicklighter.

REMARKS - LIEUTENANT GENERAL CLAUDE M. KICKLIGHTER

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KICKLIGHTER: Commander-in-Chief Nier, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Moon, former Commanders-in-Chief, National Officers, Fellow Veterans, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am extremely humbled and honored to be with this group again. This is a group of great Americans who have served their nation in time of war. Thank you also for the opportunity to participate in the 98th Annual Convention here in this beautiful Salt Lake City.

This morning I want to briefly talk to you about two subjects. First, I want to thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all the Departments and Posts that did so much to assist our nation, a grateful nation, as we commemorated the 50th anniversary of World War II.

Then, secondly, I would like to provide a quick overview for the planning of the forthcoming commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. First, thank you for the work that this great organization, the VFW, did to make the 50th anniversary of World War II so meaningful.

I can tell you from the bottom of my heart that no organization in our nation worked as hard as the VFW and contributed as much as you did.

From December 7th, 1991, the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, through Veterans Day, 1995, when our nation was engaged in a monumental effort to honor and thank our World War II veterans and their families, especially the families that lost loved ones in that war, the Gold Star mothers and the Gold Star wives and the Gold Star children.

This group, above all others, knows that freedom is not free. Our nation also remembered those who served on the home front; overnight America to the arsenal of democracy, not only supported our forces but also supported our allies and were able to keep them in the force as well.

To help carry out this important mission, our nation turned to the VFW and other veterans organizations, states and communities all across our nation and from around the world to assist in this monumental effort. Their response was overwhelming.

We asked communities and organizations to join our nation in an effort to thank and honor our veterans. When we closed the commemoration, there were 7,780 World War commemorative communities that were engaged in this mission.

More than 1,000 of those commemorative communities were Departments, Post and Auxiliaries of the VFW, and that did not include the commemorative communities that were recruited by the VFW organizations in the areas where they lived. You were the leaders in recruiting the support for this mission.

Your effort had a major impact on the outcome. Another important factor was the VFW magazine, which highlighted World War II as seen through the eyes of the VFW veterans. These articles were informative, emotional, educational and put a human face on the realities of war.

The VFW was the driving force in arranging ceremonies throughout America and throughout the world to remember our veterans. During this period, we also emphasized the importance of education, the importance of learning from this history.

If we learn and if we prepare and remain strong, maybe the legacy to these children and grandchildren of these veterans of World War II will become known as the last world war. In support of education, with the VFW, we have provided materials to more than 20,000 schools, and one of the most important parts of that program is the VFW helped put veterans into the classroom, a true highlight of the educational program with veterans going into the school sharing their experiences.

The VFW also published two very important and popular educational materials. One was, "Through My Eyes", a pamphlet written from the views of the children who grew up in World War II, and the second was a speaker's guide to help all of us prepare to speak about World War II in our community.

Throughout this period, there were hundreds of major television programs about that war and as much as anything this had a tremendous

impact on young Americans about what the legacy of this generation was. Together we worked to tell the story of women and minorities, a story that had not been properly told.

They have had a major impact on that war, even though they had overcome very difficult obstacles to serve and to fight for survival of this nation. During the commemorative period, we have remembered those that faced in the major battle of the war by holding hundreds of commemorative events at home and around the world, many which were on the battlefields of that war.

The VFW was there every step of the way. Your efforts under the leadership of your Commanders-in-Chief throughout the commemorative period played a major role, starting with Bob Wallace in 1991-'92, who organized and helped us get off the ground. He was followed by Jack Carney, in '92-'93, who kept that momentum and kept the VFW leading our nation in this very important mission. Then George Cramer, in '93-'94, did a great job in helping us continue this effort. Then as we came to a close, Gunner Kent was very instrumental in leading the VFW to stay engaged and to help our nation. Then Paul Spera, in '95-'96, not only as the Commander-in-Chief, but the Vice Commander-in-Chief helped us bring this to a very emotional conclusion.

I think we are very lucky to have the VFW and I am proud to be a Life Member, that we have such excellent leaders at the National Headquarters. During this time, Howard Vander Clute, Mike Gormally, Larry Rivers, Ken Steadman, Bill Smith and so many others were with us day by day as we planned and helped our nation form this mission.

Throughout this five-year period, the VFW set the example for remembering our veterans and their families. As the commemoration came to a close, we commemorated VJ Day in September, '95, and in October, '95, the United States Senate and House of Representatives came together in a joint meeting of Congress and resolved that Congress would never forget those who served our nation, and they asked all Americans to join together in the week of 4-11-95 to bring to a close the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of World War II.

It was a very moving event in our Congress. The House chamber was filled with overflow. The joint meeting was co-chaired by the Speaker and the Vice-President. In response to the joint meeting, the closing week of November 11th was filled with emotion, patriotism and special events all across America.

Our nation officially closed the 50th anniversary on Veterans Day November 11, 1995, in Washington, D.C. The site, where the World War II Memorial is to be built, was dedicated by the President. What a beautiful and appropriate site that is. On that same day, there were many parades all across the nation, the largest being conducted in New York City.

United our nation is a grateful nation to remember our World War II veterans and their families. They fought the most destructive war in history, a war that we were not prepared for. They fought and won that war

and literally saved the world. Then they came home and took off their uniforms and built this great America.

One more time I would like to ask the World War II veterans to stand and let us thank you and salute you. Will you, please, stand. (Applause)

To be honest, there was no proper way that our nation could thank this generation. What a special generation.

In 1950, just five years after the end of World War II, young Americans were again asked to fight another but different kind of war, the Korea War. In 1945, the U.S. had been the most powerful armed forces the world had ever seen. When that war ended, we dismantled the armed forces in a wholesale manner.

In June, 1950, North Korea attacked South Korea, we were unprepared to fight, and again we had to buy time to prepare to fight, and we lost that time in loss of young Americans. We should never let that happen again. It is now time to prepare and thank and honor our Korean war veterans and their families as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of that war.

The commemorations will start in June, 2000. We will highlight the historical importance of the contributions of our Korean War veterans. Most Americans and many Korean veterans don't fully understand what was accomplished by that war. We must correct those misperceptions as we commemorate the Korean War.

The commemorative event will inform future generations this nation's heroes fought in Korea. Many were wounded and many died there. Our veterans left a proud legacy in places like Inchon, Chosin Reservoir, and hundreds of other places will forever live in the minds and hearts of the veterans who served there.

In June, 1953, the war stopped. The fighting stopped, but the war was not officially ended. We have our armistice and we have our demilitarized zone. Today armed forces still face one another across the fortified border. The passage of time has revealed the legacy of the Korean War veterans and what it means to our nation, and we are just beginning to comprehend what was accomplished there 50 years ago.

Today we see a strong democratic, prosperous independent nation, one of the fastest growing economies in the world, the product of unsurpassed selfless service, courage, valor and the determination of our veterans, and by the South Korean veterans and by the veterans of 20 other nations who fought with us side by side under the United Nations flag.

From dark clouds of this war came an optimism for a lasting peace, a hope that the freedom of the South Korean people could be protected against Communist aggression. That hope, still very much alive, was bought by a very high price of blood of our veterans, Korean veterans.

Today our troops still stand guard at the 38th parallel. When the guns fell silent over that war torn Korea, the cost was high. The loss of lives and wounded were higher. Many questions were asked why were we

involved in that war? Four decades later, an independent economical, prosperous and democratic nation of more than 46 million people stand free as a result of that sacrifice.

That nation stands as hope and as a model for the emerging democracies of the world, and as an example that many are trying to follow. Contrast this with North Korea, a nation under the Communist rule of tyranny, nationwide starvation an uncertain future, heavily armed camps, and the economy in shambles. What a contrast for the world to see: democracy and Communism in action.

Truly, this was a victory for peace and freedom and democracy and for hope for not only the people of South Korea but the people all over the world. Although our work is unfinished and we continue to work for a lasting peace and the possibility of a peaceful reunification of Korea, our Korean War veterans kept the torch of freedom burning in a nation under siege for armed aggression from the North, supported by the Soviet Union and the Russians.

Freedom for South Korea was not free. 35,000 Americans gave their life, some of the most brutal fighting that we have ever been in. Another 100,000 were wounded and the losses of South Korean armed forces and Korean people were staggering.

Civilian losses were awesome; mostly women and children who got overrun by that war. Today, nearly 50 years later, there are still many of our veterans and others that are unaccounted for. Today our nation has another important mission, to plan and execute the commemoration for the 50th anniversary of the Korean War.

The VFW will again play a major role in this effort, along with the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, led by our good friend Gunner Kent, who is already working with us, and other types of service organizations will assist our nation in properly thanking and honoring those veterans from Korea.

We want to take all that we have learned from commemorating the 50th anniversary of World War II and invest that knowledge and experience as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of Korea. With your help, we will organize America to ensure that every Korean veteran knows that a grateful nation has not forgotten his service 50 years ago.

We want to again request the communities and the schools to join in this effort all across our land. Together we must now tell the story correctly, proudly and properly. We want to make sure that we show our veterans that we have not forgotten them.

At this time I would also like to show you the first example of the Korean commemorative flag that we are proposing. You are one of the first groups that will see this. I hope we can get this up on the screen. As you see this flag, it says, "The Korean War, Freedom is not Free."

You see the 22 gold stars around the center of that flag. We want to hear from you. That is the U.S. and Korea, and our 20 allies. The blue color that you see is the color of the U.N. flag. This is your flag. We want

this flag to be all across our nation in all of our communities and all of our VFW Posts. So if you have any thoughts about this, we would like for you to contact us.

I would like to also show you the official logo for that war. I hope that you will be able to use this, and I would tell you that many other additional commemorative products and educational materials are already being developed and we will be able to provide these very soon to the organizations as you help get our nation organized.

Even though we have got over two years before June, 2000, we need to begin this coming year to get this commemoration organized and off the ground. In the coming months, we will be working with your National Headquarters, and in September we will provide the National Headquarters a copy of the draft commemorative plan for them to review and provide comments.

In October, we will invite the National Commander and a delegation to come to the Pentagon in Washington where we will thoroughly review and go through making sure that we have got the kind of commemorative program that our veterans deserve. The VFW will be instrumental in helping us build that program throughout this next year.

The commemoration officially begins in June, 2000, 50 years from the time that the war began, and it will end on Veterans Day, November 11, 2003. There are planned many events each year throughout our nation, and many of those events will be in other nations, our allies.

There will be a lot of events in Korea. We are also working already with the Korean government and the Korean veterans association. We very much want to make this a very special event. We will be working and have been working with the 20 nations that were our allies in that war, and we will keep you informed as we go through this process.

If you have not visited Korea, I would commend to you to visit Korea. You will see a miracle. You will see a miracle that happened because of the service and sacrifice of our veterans. We will always remember our veterans for giving us this strong and free, beautiful America that we are privileged to wake up in every morning.

We will also remember all those that gave all their tomorrows that we can live in this great land. When you are giving all of your tomorrows at 18 and 19 years old is a very high price to pay. It has been said any nation that forgets its veterans ceases to be a great nation.

The VFW will always ensure that America never forgets its veterans. I want to thank the VFW, my organization, for the wonderful job you did in assisting our nation in honoring our World War II veterans. I want to thank you for what I know you will do again as we lead our nation in thanking our Korean War veterans.

I also want to thank you for all you do every day in taking care of those who served our armed forces and what you-all do in America for our veterans and all the youth in America. You are what makes America the great nation that is today. Thank you very much. God bless the VFW, our

veterans and their families, and God bless America. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, General. As he is departing, obviously, he will have our support for this effort.

INTRODUCTION OF BRIGADIER GENERAL WILMA L. VAUGHT,
PRESIDENT, WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE FOR AMERICA
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, INC.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Ladies and gentlemen, in 1986, Congress authorized the construction of a memorial in Washington, D.C., that would be a lasting tribute to the women who have served or are serving in our nation's armed forces. This October, two years after ground-breaking for that memorial took place, the opening dedication will take place at the gates of Arlington National Cemetery.

When one considers that almost two million women have served the U.S. military throughout history, from the American Revolution through Operation Desert Storm, it is most fitting that such a memorial receive the backing and support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

This morning we are pleased to have with us the distinguished President of the Women in Military Service for America Foundation, Retired Air Force Brigadier General Wilma Vaught.

Please join me in a very warm VFW welcome for a fellow VFW member and the President of the Women's Memorial, Brigadier General Wilma Vaught.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

REMARKS - BRIGADIER GENERAL WILMA VAUGHT

BRIGADIER GENERAL VAUGHT: Please sit down. Don't encourage me to give my 20-minute speech. What a pleasure it is to be back with you today. You know, the Convention in 1986 was the year the legislation was passed authorizing us to have this memorial in Washington, D.C.

It was in March, 1987, that I missed the meeting of the Board of Directors that was being formed to carry out this process. I was elected President. I want to tell you I have not missed a meeting of the Board of Directors since. Don't miss meetings.

When you give money, you sometimes wonder what is going to happen to it. The VFW has now given us some \$99,657. So I am pleased to report to you that your money has gone to something good. The next time you go into Arlington National Cemetery and you look at that wall that has been standing there for sixty some years, you are going to be glad to have made a donation for this memorial, because truly the main gate in Arlington is going to be a thing for all of us as Americans to be proud of instead of the way it has been looking for the last 20 or 30 years.

We have planned a fantastic series of events for dedication. We are going to have a gala on Thursday, the 16th of October, followed by a big reunion on the 17th, and then the dedication at noon on the 18th. That evening we are going to do a candlelight march and service of remembrance.

The candlelight march will start at the Lincoln Memorial and walk to the main gate in Arlington. I hope that we will see some VFW units will participate in that. We are expecting about 30,000 people at the dedication and about 10,000 for the march.

Then the next day, at the amphitheater, we will have a time to give thanks. That dedication is just one month and 29 days from today, and as I think about one month and 29 days, I wonder whether I should be here or back there still working to get ready. I probably should be back there doing something to get ready.

But we will be ready, and I want you to encourage the women who belonged to our Post to come to this dedication. This memorial is for them. It is a fact thing. They should be there to be a part of it. Many of the Posts have registered its women.

I hope, as you search in the community for other women that should be registered for the memorial, that this helps you get additional members in the VFW, because I just don't think we have as many women in the VFW as we should have. So I hope to see that go up.

I just want you to know from the standpoint of the foundation, I am committed that every woman veteran who can make it to Washington, D.C., for the memorial will be able to take in everything that she wants to take in regardless of whatever disability she may have.

We are the only organization that has ever made such a commitment. We did it for the ground-breaking and we are going to do it again. We will have wheelchairs, or whatever it takes so that they can participate in their memorial.

I wish I could say the memorial is all finished. It is about 90 percent finished. There is a huge reflecting pool in front, about 80 feet across. Yesterday morning when I stopped before I left, it was full of water. So it is getting there. But it is not on, it is not going to be all finished even at the dedication.

Not all the exhibits will be in, because we are still raising money to pay for those. Please don't stop giving. We still need you. We have about 250,000 of the 1.8 million women that served our country registered. I need your help in getting the rest of them.

I hope you will stop by our booth over here in the Exhibit Hall and pick up one of our registration forms for the women in your community in case they are not registered. Also while you are there, we will try to sell you one of our commemorative coins — that is the only place you can buy them — or sell you a necklace for your wife or whatever adulteress relationship you are in, or whoever you want to buy one for we will sell you one. What more can I say?

I hope, Mr. Moon, that you will make it all the way over from Ohio on October 18th to the dedication. Jim, you come up from Texas. We will welcome you all. I hope you will be there for it.

I would be remiss if I did not close with a quotation from one of our women that this memorial is going on. This is from one of our Army women veterans who said, "I spent four years in the Army. Although now I am married and a mother, I still want to be remembered as a soldier."

In this memorial we are going to remember every soldier, sailor, airmen, Marine and Coast Guard person. General Kicklighter had World War II veterans to stand up, and I thought most of the audience was standing up. I want to have the women veterans to stand up, and we will probably have to search to find them.

Where are you women veterans? Yes, you are here. Thank you for coming and be there on October 18th. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF JAN C. SCRUGGS, PRESIDENT VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The most visited memorial in our nation's capital is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. While each year millions of visitors have experienced the healing power of that memorial, millions have not had the opportunity.

Millions don't have the resources to make the journey. Some find the war's legacy too painful to confront, particularly as strangers in an unfamiliar city.

One way of reaching out across America to help not only Vietnam veterans but veterans of all wars, from World War I to Desert Storm, is through the efforts of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and its support of the Wall that Heals.

A half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., travels across America, speaking not of the loss, but of the lives of 58,202 men and women, our parents, or neighbors and friends.

This traveling memorial transcends the war in Vietnam and serves to help our nation renew its relationship with veterans of all wars.

We are fortunate to have with us this morning, the President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Jan Scruggs, who in 1979 had a vision to create a national memorial with the names of all Americans who gave their lives in the Vietnam War.

Ladies and gentlemen, please help me give a very warm VFW welcome to Jan Scruggs. (Applause)

REMARKS - JAN C. SCRUGGS, PRESIDENT, VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

COMRADE JAN SCRUGGS: I greatly appreciate the kind introduction and I, as many of you, am really looking forward to October

when we see the women's memorial dedicated. This is just going to be a really great thing.

From the plains of Nebraska to the coast of Maine, from California's beautiful fertile valleys to the deck of the carrier of Yorktown in Charleston, South Carolina, the wall that heals, the half scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has traveled throughout the country. Wherever this memorial has been, the volunteers and the great patriots of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have been there to help the public better understand this memorial.

We have really gone out of our way to make this an event for communities that involves the veterans of all the different military conflicts. We really want to see the people from the Desert Storm era get involved as well, and we think this is sort of working.

But to help you all better understand the importance of this replica and the Wall that Heals, I am wondering if I could just show you a video that I think will be helpful.

(Whereupon, the video was presented at this time.)

This has been a really great program which I think has allowed the VFW to get recognition from communities and really get our message out there in the schools, and it is programs like this that really show the aging veterans that the VFW is an organization which is not just looking towards the past, reliving the past, it is an organization that is really looking towards the future, that is creating programs in the future, that is reaching out to the nation's veterans.

The VFW has a future because of the leadership that is part of this organization. It has got a very important future as an advocate for military veterans, and for this reason I am certainly more than proud to be a Life Member of this organization.

I would like to leave with you today with one final thought. I know every time I come to a Convention politicians from Washington routinely come here and they routinely say the things that the crowd wants to hear. They are good at that. But I will say this, that you should not really believe for a moment that the veterans' lobby in Washington, D.C., is an influential lobby.

I will tell you some lobbies that are influential, the chemical companies, the automobile manufacturers, the pharmaceutical industry, the medical industry, the doctors. These are groups that have a very strong and powerful voice in Washington, D.C. It is really only through the efforts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that we have anything, that we have a little bit of push and shove that we can bring the members out and talk to the members of Congress and keep them from taking our benefits away. I hope you will all bear that in mind.

I wish I was a bearer of better tidings. But the VFW has a future, and the future is to continue to advocate for our nation's veterans of all military conflicts. Thank you all very much.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS,
MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL (Cont'd.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, yesterday we finished the debate on three resolutions as part of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. At this time I will ask the Chairman of that Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney, to come forward and give some updates.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Just to be fair, with your permission, I would like to once again state the recommended rejections by our Committee, so everyone knows what were rejected by the Committee and so stated yesterday. I will go through it again.

The Committee recommends for rejection B-4, B-5, B-9, B-10, B-12, B-14, B-15, B-16, B-17, B-18, B-19, B-20, B-21, and yesterday, after the roll call, B-22, 23 and 26 were rejected. B-24, B-25, B-27, B-28, B-29, B-30, B-31 and B-32 were rejected by the Committee.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I understand that we were asked to set aside B-25.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is correct, Mr. Chairman. B-25 was asked to be set aside yesterday.

Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Howard Vander Clute, Post 6467, New Jersey, and a Past Commander-in-Chief. I move the adoption of B-25.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RALPH CORNO (Post 1302 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ralph Corno, a delegate from Post 1302, State Commander of New Jersey, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. There is a motion on the floor and duly seconded to adopt B-25. We will now debate B-25.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): As you know, B-8 was defeated. Although it was recommended for adoption, it was defeated by the body yesterday. Essentially, that disenfranchised the Department of New Jersey as having a Council representative on the National Council of Administration.

B-25, the principal provision is to lower the number of members within the Department from 70,000 to 65,000 to qualify for a Council District and thus representation on the National Council of Administration. I would add, sir, that one of the principal reasons that our Department and our Conference, even though it disenfranchised us, in being opposed to it, it would not give an opportunity to some of the smaller Departments in the Eastern Conference. We have a concern for them.

Commander-in-Chief, we know that B-25 is flawed, as was B-8, which you allowed to be heard on the floor and voted on, and we

appreciate that. We appreciate the fact that you are allowing us, even though this is flawed, to be heard this morning.

However, in view of the fact that it is flawed, and let me refer to the flaw. The first part of that section of the By-Laws, Section 617, states the number of members required, 70,000, and we are asking it to be reduced to 65,000 in our by-law amendment. This is sponsored by New Jersey alone.

Now, in the last part of that, the penalty clauses in that By-Law still continue to say 70,000. It is a flawed by-law. I ask the delegates to consider this since it will be yours to decide that in the Demeter's Manual, which may prevail in this case should you decide it does, it clearly says a by-law is repealed, and this would be the old by-law, "by a new by-law which is so inconsistent therewith that both cannot stand."

The inconsistency is now obvious to you, 65,000 and 70,000. "The adoption of a new by-law covering the same grounds as the former one and intended for the same purpose," which this by-law is. It is intended for the same purpose, impliably appeals and supersedes the earlier by-law.

That is the existing one, "So that any penalties" — and here is our problem — "So any penalties imposed by the earlier or other provisions therein be omitted from the latter by-law no longer applies." So, essentially, if it is approved, as I see it, it would wipe out the last paragraph of Section 617.

Now, also I would like to quote from the interpretation of the by-law amendment. It says, "The primary object in the interpretation of by-laws is to ascertain and give effect of the intention of the framers thereof." Our intent was to reduce the figure to 65,000.

Having said all of that, also in the Manual of Procedure under 617 it is blank. The Council of Administration has the authority to amend the Manual of Procedure and can amend 617 at their first meeting to include the penalty clauses and thus make the by-law complete.

At the next Convention we can come back with a by-law that everything is covered in the by-law itself. So, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I think the way it stands now, New Jersey does not have representation. We think and we feel, and many of us in the Eastern Conference feel we need more representation on the National Council of Administration, and we are asking this delegation here this morning to find it in their hearts to find representation on the National Council of Administration for New Jersey. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE PALMATEER (Post 4171 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am George Palmateer from Post 4171, Colorado. I stand to speak in favor of this amendment. I believe this could happen to any Department at any time where there is a dynamic change in the procedures of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I also feel we are creating another Council with four states

involved, and there is already one, which I think is unfair. I, therefore, speak in favor of the amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, George. There is no one at Microphone No. 3. There is nobody at Microphone No. 2, either. Any further debate. Hearing none, the motion is to adopt B-25. Those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign "no". The Chair rules that the motion to adopt fails because it is less than two-thirds vote.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I call for a roll call vote. New Jersey calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is one.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Ron Rusko, Post 9460, Stratford, Connecticut, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is two. It takes ten Departments, comrades.

COMRADE ALMON LONG (Department of Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Department A votes to go along with New Jersey.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is three.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LYNN HALL (Department of Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, Hall, Department of Kansas, requests a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is four.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOSEPH BRAND (Department of Montana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Joe Brand, Department of Montana, asks for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is five.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GREG WOODRING (Department of Arizona): Arizona requests a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is six.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GERARD MISERANDINO (Department of the District of Columbia): Miserandino, Post 2979, Department of D.C. Commander, calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE VIRGIL MULLINS (Department of New Hampshire): Virgil Mullins, Post 2618, Department of New Hampshire, requests a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE PHILIP SCHIFFMAN (Department of New York): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Philip Schiffman, Post 8691, State Commander of New York, requests a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is nine.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PETER KRENITSKY (Department of Pennsylvania): Pennsylvania calls for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: That is ten. We will have a roll call vote. I will ask the Credentials Committee to come forward and see if there are any changes in the numbers.

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, as Chairman of the National Credentials Committee, there is one change. The total delegate strength now is 12,011, bringing the grand total to 12,129. Commander-in-Chief, that is the report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We will take a ten-minute break to have the roll call vote and caucus. I will hit the gavel at 11:25.

(RECESS.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The ten minutes are up, comrades. The lights are coming up. It will take a little while. Will the Department Commanders please do as we did yesterday, line up at Microphones 1, 2 and 3 in alphabetical order.

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 4847 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have a question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 7826 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Al Loehr, Post 7826, East St. Cloud. My question, Commander-in-Chief, is this. How can we legitimately vote on a flawed resolution under the direction of our parliamentary rules?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Just a minute. I will try to get you the answer. Is the Parliamentarian here, Larry Maher? Give us a couple of minutes, Al. We will get our Parliamentarian back. Thank you.

Al, I am going to try to explain this the best I can. It is my opinion the by-law is flawed. I am going to rule that to express democracy, we voted on one yesterday, that we will vote on this one.

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 7826 - Minnesota): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Let's have the roll call, please.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: My fellow delegates, let me give you a recap of the strength. There are 12,011 total delegates, 53 Department Commanders, 27 Past Commanders-in-Chief, 38 National Officers. We ask the State Commanders to line up in the right order.

(As the Adjutant General called the roll, the following votes were cast:)

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Commander-in-Chief Nier		X
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Moon		X
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Pouliot		X

Adjutant General Rivers		X
Quartermaster General Ridgley - (Voted with Post)		
Judge Advocate General Leonard Herrst		X
Surgeon General Robert Reif		X
National Chaplain William J. Bleiler	X	
National Chief of Staff Bill E. Lark		X
Inspector General Charles Stephens		X

<u>DISTRICTS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
District No. 1 - Arthur Roy	X	
District No. 2 - William J. Madera	X	
District No. 3 - Armondo C. Azzinaro		
District No. 4 - Bruce A. Withers	X	
District No. 5 - John L. Dahman	X	
District No. 6 - Scottie E. King		X
District No. 7 - Roy C. Womble	X	
District No. 8 - Oliver W. Dial		X
District No. 9 - George M. Pullie		X
District No. 10 - Leslie F. Thone		X
District No. 11 - Bernard J. Boyle	X	
District No. 12 - William F. Cerny, Jr.	X	
District No. 13 - Jack L. Armagost	X	
District No. 14 - Earl E. Chase - (Voted with Post)		
District No. 15 - James A. Ferguson		
District No. 16 - Dannie Cooper	X	
District No. 17 - Gary L. Clark	X	
District No. 19 - J. Hollis Smith		X
District A - Armon J. Long	X	
District B - Russell R. Rieke	X	
District C - Ralph U. DeMarco	X	
District D - George W. Marks		X
District E - Gordon W. Kirk		X
District F - Wayne A. Buck	X	
District G - Raymond C. Sisk	X	
District H - Ferrell Warden		X
District I - George J. Lisicki	X	
District J - Eugene R. Manfrey		X

<u>DISTRICTS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Alabama		216
Alaska	84	
Arizona	204	
Arkansas		157
California	500	132
Colorado	230	6
Connecticut	226	

Delaware	121	
District of Columbia	40	
Department of Europe	38	
Florida		459
Georgia	22	159
Hawaii	40	
Idaho	84	
Illinois	465	236
Indiana	364	
Iowa	139	
Kansas	257	21
Kentucky	138	
Latin America/Caribbean	27	
Louisiana		188
Maine	110	
Maryland	347	
Massachusetts	373	
Michigan	163	320
Minnesota	272	131
Mississippi		142
Missouri	301	
Montana	92	
Nebraska	188	
Nevada	53	21
New Hampshire	115	
New Jersey	361	
New Mexico	121	
New York	325	
North Carolina		249
North Dakota	120	
Ohio	732	
Oklahoma	26	140
Oregon	125	
Pacific Areas	75	
Pennsylvania	559	
Rhode Island	60	
South Carolina		96
South Dakota	178	
Tennessee	144	
Texas		546
Utah	73	
Vermont	102	
Virginia	216	
Washington	175	
West Virginia		218
Wisconsin	208	

Wyoming	1	53
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<u>PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Billy Ray Cameron		X
John M. Carney		X
Ted C. Connell		X
George R. Cramer	X	
James R. Currieo	X	
Arthur J. Fellwock	X	
Walter G. Hogan	X	
Cooper T. Holt	X	
Richard W. Homan		X
Allen F. Kent	X	
James L. Kimery		X
John W. Mahan		X
Clifford G. Olson, Jr.	X	
Eric Sandstrom	X	
Joseph A. Scerra	X	
R. D. Smith, Jr.	X	
Ray Soden	X	
Paul A. Spera	X	
Norman G. Staab	X	
John Staum - (Voted with Post)		
Howard Vander Clute, Jr.	X	
Thomas C. Walker	X	

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, that completes the roll call. Commander-in-Chief, the total delegate strength is 12,155. A two-thirds vote would be 8,103.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: It will take us just a few minutes for the Convention Committee to make the tally.

COMRADE GEORGE MEAD (Post 9400 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, a point of order. Isn't it two-thirds of the votes cast, not two-thirds of what you said?

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: That is correct, two-thirds of the total votes cast.

WINNERS OF INSURANCE DRAWING

ASSISTANT QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: If we have a moment here, I would like to announce the winners of the insurance drawings.

For the \$25 is Daryl Mobley, Post 3630 - Nevada.

The \$50 winner is Richard Hafner, Post 5896 - Missouri. I didn't cheat. This is a gentleman from Missouri that is a winner.

The \$100 winner is John N. Fabbro, Post 4208, Florida.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, while we are getting the tally, this is an important announcement I am about to make. Due to the longevity of the debate on the by-laws yesterday and today, we are going to have to change the time of the All-American Commander's Breakfast to 7:00 a.m. instead of 7:30, and we will start the business session tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. instead of 9:00.

Please bear with us. We have to do that to get all the by-laws in. We want to have the debate and we want to have deliberations, so in order to do that and not move workshops or cancel them, please bear with us and make note of that 7:00 a.m. for the All-American Breakfast and at 8:00 o'clock a.m. the business session will start tomorrow morning. That will be 8:00 o'clock sharp.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wayne Thompson, Post 5601, Department of Colorado. A point of information. Are you going to conduct any further business today?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: No, we are not. We have to be out of here by noon so they can set up for the Patriotic Rally tonight, plus the workshops start at 1:00 o'clock. That is why we made the decision to start early tomorrow.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, the roll count has been completed. There was a total of 12,157 votes cast: 7,746 yes; 4,411 no. Two-thirds of 12,157 would be 8,104. The yes votes were 7,746. It failed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The Chair rules that B-25 is rejected for lack of a two-thirds vote.

I will ask the National Chaplain to please come forward for the Benediction.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Bleiler gave the Benediction at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room to Salute the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was had.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We are recessed until 8:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:15 o'clock p.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION
WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 20, 1997

(The Third Business Session of the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier presiding.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I call this Business Session to order. I will ask the National Chaplain to please come forward with the Opening Prayer, please

(Whereupon, the National Sergeant-at-Arms led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance and National Chaplain William Bleiler gave the Opening Prayer from the Ritual.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I will ask the Chairman of the Credentials Committee to please come forward with his report.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Department of Kansas. This is a temporary report.

This Committee had, as of 4:00 o'clock yesterday afternoon, total delegates, 12,567; Department Commanders, 54; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 27; total National Officers, 38. That makes a grand total of 12,686 as of 4:00 o'clock yesterday afternoon. Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I would like to make one administrative announcement before we move into the resolutions. The buses will continue to run until 11:00 p.m. this evening. That is a change in the schedule. The buses will continue to run until 11:00 p.m. this evening.

At this time I will ask to come forward the Chairman of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual for the continuation of his Committee Report. Comrade Carney.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS,
MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL (Cont'd.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates, this morning I will once again for the benefit of each and every one of us read those that were rejected by the Committee. The Committee recommends rejection of the following: B-4, B-5, B-9, B-10, B-12, B-14, B-15, B-16, B-17, B-18, B-19, B-20, B-21, B-24, B-27, B-28, B-29, B-30, B-31 and B-32.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the delegates have already rejected B-22, B-23, B-25 and B-26.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144 - Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, a delegate from Boston, Massachusetts. I move for the adoption of B-15.

COMRADE JOHN THORNTON (Post 7686 - New Mexico): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: There has been a motion duly made and seconded to adopt B-15. B-15 is now open for debate.

Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144 - Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, on Monday afternoon we had debate on B-13, and in the midst of that debate I went to the microphone and indicated my opposition to B-13 and that we had intended in its place to bring up B-15.

I stated on Monday, and I will repeat it again today, I know there are people in this room who will disagree, but I believe that for the financial future of our Departments and our National Organization we must at some point in time raise the rates on Life Membership.

We must raise the rates in order to raise the pay-outs to those entities. Today, \$3.50 per member is the by-law that is in effect. Because of finances, we have been able to pay out \$5. This year, because the interest rates have dropped, we are only going to be able to pay out \$4.50.

You can almost bet that over the next few years that that rate will lower to \$4 and eventually down to the \$3.50 for all Life Members. That is going to place an unfair burden on the Departments in the National Organization. B-15 is the result of a lot of work that was done, not by a handful of individuals but by the entire Eastern Conference.

Last year following the Convention, we decided that what we would do as a conference was to take a look at the Life Membership, take a look at the rates, take a look at the pay-outs, to ask the Department Quartermasters to come in and give us information.

More importantly, to go back to the Posts where it all happens, go back to those people that the Life Membership Program is for. You know, the Life Membership is not about money on the Post level, the Life Membership Program on the Post level is about stabilizing that membership, about being able to sell a member a Life Membership, and never have to be concerned with collecting their dues again.

That is the importance of a Life Membership Program for the Posts. So for them, a pay-out, whether it is \$3.50, \$4.50 or \$5.50, that is not what is important to them. So when we deliberate, when we met at our first meeting in October and again in the Washington Conference, and finally in our meeting in April, what we tried to accomplish, and we think we did with B-15, we tried to accomplish something that took care of everyone.

The top rate on B-15 is \$245. Most of the people that I spoke to personally, Post Quartermasters, Membership Chairmen, Post Commanders, indicated that they felt they could still sell Life Memberships

in the price range that B-15 covers. The Department Quartermasters that I spoke to indicated that the \$5.50 pay-out that B-15 allows at least improves their position by \$2 for every member that is sold in the future.

Now, this is not going to do anything for the 1.1 million members that we already have as Life Members. This change will only take place for every future Life Member that is sold. I hope that everyone in this room understands that what we are trying to accomplish is to take care of the Post members in the first place and yet come up with enough income to make life a little easier for your Departments and for the National Organization, because it may fail financially, then the Life Membership Program means nothing.

I urge every one of you to consider B-15 and assist us in getting it passed. Thank you very much, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Past Commander-in-Chief.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glen Gardner, Jr., a delegate from VFW Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I stand in support of this by-law change which would allow stability and an increase in the amount of fees that are received back from the Life Members.

I agree with our Past Commander-in-Chief that this amount of increase will not deter the Life Members, but we, from the Department level especially must look at what we are going to be able to do in the future to generate the funds that are necessary on the Department level and on a National level to carry on the programs in this great organization. I would encourage the delegates to support this by-law change. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173 - California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Richard Pignone, Post 3173, California. I rise as a delegate in opposition to any increase in our Life Membership program, be it B-13, B-15, or any other one. Last year we had the resounding vote of "no" on a Life Membership increase.

I am also a recruiter. Last year I supported the program for shotguns. Out of the 18 shotguns that I had last year, because of where the price stood, the fees, I was able to sign up 15 Life Members out of 18. I think that is pretty good. I think that is adding to our program.

It has given us more money, steady money. The Life Member starts everybody off with a big step, be it a Post Commander, District Commander, Department Commander or the National Commander. Having a base of membership, such as the Life Program, adds to our organization.

It is very hard to go out with an increase of \$45 or \$200 for the young fellow or the young lady to join our organization. I, as a recruiter, had a hard time when it was \$200 to get them to pay. They don't have the

money. The higher you go in the Life Membership increase, it is very hard to bring in a veteran.

They will go maybe for the annual membership. But, my comrades, we already had a resounding “no” the other day. We had the most Life Membership increase last year than we ever had. What we are lacking is on the annual membership. That is where we should be aiming our contract, not at the Life Members.

With that, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I thank you very much and I thank everyone for listening to me. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of Colorado. I would express concerns about the percentage of increase in the various categories. The Departments of Colorado and Nebraska submitted By-Law Amendment B-17, which basically took information that came to us from the National Office and we proposed an increase, a more modest increase, and in the event this amendment fails, the motion before us, I intend to move for the adoption of B-17. So I actually ask for a “no” vote on this, sir. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Howard Vander Clute, a delegate from Post 6467, Bergenfield, New Jersey, and a Past Commander-in-Chief. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am in favor of this by-law.

I think that one of the arguments that was made this morning quite articulately by the new Council member from California, was that we signed up so many Life Members last year as a result of the fact that the fee that was proposed by National had been defeated at the National Convention.

We were very successful. We went over a million Life Members. I think we had the biggest increase in our Life Membership in the entire history of our organization. This By-Law B-15, I don’t know if you are all aware, has a provision in it that will not become effective until January 1st, 1998.

The biggest influx of Life Members comes during the period of September, October, November and December. Those are the times for collecting annual dues and those are the times that the members have an opportunity to opt for Life Membership.

We will do very well once again, and yet we will have addressed the integrity of the Life Member Fund. It gives us two opportunities. I stand in favor of B-15. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE PALMATEER (Post 4171 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, George Palmateer, Post 4171, Colorado. I

speak in favor of B-15. I like the idea of my Post being guaranteed \$5.50 rather than \$3.50. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ROY HEATH (Post 10047 - Nevada): Commander-in-Chief, Roy Heath, Post 10047, Las Vegas, Nevada, State Quartermaster for Nevada. We cannot continue to lose money in a small state like Nevada and operate our programs. That is the grassroots of this organization for our programs.

Last year, when we defeated this, I went back to Las Vegas and talked to people. I had one comrade that was 45 years old, and he belongs to the American Legion Post, and it would cost him \$540 to belong to the American Legion Post for the Life Membership.

We need to raise it, and I speak in favor of this. We cannot continue to lose money and run our programs. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEVE JACOBS (Post 5944 - California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Steve Jacobs, Senior Vice Commander from the Department of California, Post 5944. Comrades, I came to the microphone last year opposing any increase and the reason was because of the amount of the increase.

This year I come in favor of this motion, because it is a reasonable increase and will do the Departments good. I believe we need to vote in favor of this increase. It will not hurt our Life Membership. I am totally in favor of this resolution. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE CHARLIE SHORT (Post 832 - Maine): Commander-in-Chief, Charlie Short from Post 832, Maine. I stand in support of B-15. B-15 will be a separate plan from the existing plan. The existing plan, as we know it right now, is not on the financial distress, but we can no longer live on 1970 actuarial tables.

There is nothing else in the world that we can live on in 1970 payouts. You don't pay for anything in 1970 prices. But from 1970 to 1997, there has been at least a 25-percent increase in the life expectancy of our total population, comrades. We must accept the responsibility in looking at this plan and devising a reasonable fee structure, not attempting to live in 1970 values.

I urgently request that you consider this plan. This is the start. This accepts our responsibilities to be active and we need to pass this plan. Thank you, comrades. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for the opportunity to speak.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOE RIDGLEY (Post 8220 - Missouri): Commander-in-Chief, I am Joe Ridgley, a delegate from Post 8220, Missouri. I just want to say before the question comes up, this by-law amendment was talked — I was asked about preparing the fees and asking the professional actuary to

work the fees on B-15. I did that.

I want you to know that the fees that are in the by-law are good fees for that pay-out. I think that we have debated this for two years and something needs to be done. I believe if you ask any Quartermaster who is in charge of the financial affairs of their state, they can tell you the same thing.

The National for the financial integrity, there is not a question of fees, it is a question of the pay-outs that they receive back just like we receive dues from annual members. We have to start someplace. Let's get on with it. We have debated it long enough. I move the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The question has been moved. Is there a second?

COMRADE WILLIAM LONG (Post 6473 - Mississippi): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We have a motion that has been duly seconded to move the question. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries.

The motion is to adopt B-15. Those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries and B-15 is adopted.

Are there any other resolutions to be set aside?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I am Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of Colorado. I move for the adoption of B-31. I would request that the proposed amendment be read to the members here.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Will you repeat that, Wayne, please?

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): I move adoption of B-31, which concerns limitations of actions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Do I hear a second?

COMRADE FRANK HARRIS (Post 5231 - Colorado): I second that motion, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: It has been moved that B-31 be adopted. B-31 is now open for debate.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of Colorado. I would like to have this read. I can do it myself or maybe the Chairman can read this. It is very short.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Do you want me to read the comments?

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Read the proposal. Do you want me to read it?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: What are you asking for again, Wayne?

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): I would like to make sure that all the members here assembled know what the amendment is. If you would have it read, please.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: This is submitted by the Department of Colorado. It is B-31. Article IX - Discipline.

"Amend Article IX - Discipline, National By-Laws, by adding as a new section the following:

"Section 908 - Limitations of Actions - Two Years.

"An action initiated accusing any member of committing an offense as set forth in Section 902 shall be commenced within two years after the cause of action accrues, not thereafter."

The comments of our Committee is that this proposal purports to establish a statute of limitations for offenses set forth in Section 902. In theory, a statute of limitations is an acceptable idea, but a two-year period may be too short, and there is no allowance made for the possibility that the offense hasn't been or couldn't be discovered.

Having such a short period of time, and not having an exception where the offense has been or could be discovered in a two-year period, actively encourages offenses to cover up their theft or fraud. The longer they can hide it, the less likely they are to be punished. That was the Committee's comments.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Do you have any further comments, Wayne?

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Yes, sir. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. The reason for this proposed amendment, comrades, is that in my experience over many, many years as the State Judge Advocate and prior to that the Deputy Judge Advocate of the Department of Colorado, we have issues that are raised that go back many, many years.

We have to make inquiries and investigations, we have to decide if we want to take action or not. It is very disruptive. It creates animosity and enmity among us and divides us. We have some responsibility to treat our comrades fair and with justice.

They have a right to be charged when we find out about the offense. They have a right to be disciplined on a timely basis, and the Department of Colorado, we brought the proposed bylaw amendment because we think strong about it. We waste many hours, days and weeks trying to resolve issues that go back forever.

It is not appropriate. As an example, this two-year statute of limitation being appropriate, the Colorado Military Justice Code that we utilize and relates to the National Guard in our state provides for a statute of limitations of two years.

Specifically, I would like to refer that to you at this time. "A person charged with any offense under the code is not likely to be tried by court-martial or punished under Section 283.114, if it was committed more than two years before the sworn charges and specifications by an officer exercising some

court-martial jurisdiction over the command or punishment, under Section 283.114.”

So if it is good for our comrades in the Guard in our state, it should be good for all of us. If we have an issue concerning a comrade, then that comrade should be charged on a timely basis and prosecuted, and either found guilty or not guilty. It has been too long.

If we leave this issue open, it festers and creates dissention and problems within the VFW. I move adoption of this by-law. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ron Rusko, Post 9460, Stratford, Connecticut. I rise in opposition to this by-law amendment. I think the National By-Law Committee did the right thing in asking this Convention to reject this by-law.

What this does, it says that anyone who might have been a rapist, murderer, a thief, or someone that committed incest, and it says if you can keep that quiet, as a member of the VFW for two years, you are home free. They could never bring you up on charges.

Obviously, we have a great organization. I think it is a very clean organization. I would like to see it stay that way and I hope that you, this delegation, will reject this by-law. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LYNN HALL (Post 6240 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Lynn Hall, Post 6240, Department of Kansas State Commander. As a Past Judge Advocate and as a Judge of a District Court of Kansas, I rise in favor of this proposal, basically, because as an example several years ago I sat in front of a court-martial convened at National on a comrade who was charged with an offense six years before he was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

At the time the comrade was charged, he was Senior Vice Commander of the Department on his way in as commander. The time element in there seemed unfair and unfitting because if he has a felony count in civil court or criminal court that is seven years.

Perhaps I may be inclined to kind of agree two years is not sufficient, but I do concur that we do need a time limitation on this. After conversation with the member of the By-Laws Committee last night, I am hopeful should this resolution not pass, that the By-Laws Committee will come to this Convention next year with one that provides some statute of limitation. It never occurred to me that a Quartermaster could hide his actions for two years and get by with it. I rise in favor of the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Lynn.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): I stand in oppo-

sition to the passage of this by-law. As the Chairman of the By-Laws Committee stated, the disciplinary action of our by-laws is a very serious portion of our by-laws. It should be taken that way.

We should have the opportunity, should we find that a member of this great organization has committed an offense under this by-law, whether, two, three or four years ago, to go after that individual and do what needs to be done in the best interest of this organization to serve. I do not believe that a two-year time limit put on this would serve this organization well, and I hope the delegates will vote “no” on this proposal.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOHN CANFIELD (Post 1999 - California): I speak in support of the Committee’s recommendation to reject the resolution. Comrades, two years time, a limitation of two years is not enough, because it takes time to know whether an offense actually occurs, and if it is a serious offense, then let’s give our organization the necessary number of years to correct or investigate this situation. I urge support of the Committee’s recommendation to reject.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LARRY ZIEBARTH (Post 6843 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Larry Ziebarth, Post 6843, Princeton, Minnesota. We had a comrade in our Post that over a four-year period of time embezzled \$281,000. We spend two and one-half years getting in court with him. By setting a time limit of two years, it is just not enough time. I rise to oppose this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WALTER DAVIS (Post 10694 - California): Commander-in-Chief, I am Walter Davis, Post 10694, Department of California. I say let the Department of Colorado come back next year with a two-year limitation, but after discovery or after reasonable diligence should have discovered the offense. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ART SHULL (Post 2843 - North Carolina): I move for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: There is a motion to move the question.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JAMES CARLISLE (Post 10097 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The motion to move the question has been duly seconded. Those in favor of moving the question will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries.

The motion is to adopt B-31. Those in favor of adopting B-31 will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed by the sign of “no”. The Chair rules

that B-31 is rejected.

Any other resolutions to be set aside? Seeing no one at the microphones, we will move into the Manual.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: In the Manual of Procedure, Commander-in-Chief, the Committee felt that Proposed Amendments M-1, M-2, M-3, M-4, M-5, M-7 and M-8 were housekeeping in nature and dealt with the preparation and submission of budgets, financial reports and inspection forms. I move they be adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STAUM: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, John Staum, Post 9625, Grand Rapids, Minnesota. I second that recommendation.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The motion is to adopt. Those in favor of the adoption will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the sign of "no". The motion carries and they are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Committee recommends the rejection of M-6, M-9, M-10, M-11 and M-12.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to move the adoption of M-11.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Which one do you want to set aside?

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): M-11, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: M-11 will be set aside.

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): I move for its adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You are moving for its adoption?

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Now, I need a second.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Now, M-11, having been duly seconded, is open for debate.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 733 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, during the Second World War the United States and Great Britain awarded, the American Campaign Medal to every service personnel who went overseas for 30 days, and that medal was awarded from December 7, 1941, to March 2, 1946.

I would just like to bring to your attention the simple fact that this is a medal that was given or awarded for overseas duty and it was awarded for non-overseas duty. I have brought it up since 1980 and, of course, it has not been successful.

The NDSM is a very similar method. It is awarded since the Korean War to service personnel who served overseas as well as those who never

left the Continental United States. Many comments were made at that time, were we going to have a Boy Scout group?

Why do you want non-combatants in the Veterans of Foreign Wars? Very simply, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we have had non-combatants in the Veterans of Foreign Wars since December 8, 1941. I take Hawaii for an example. Millions and millions of service personnel went to Hawaii, and if you want to ask me about it, I was one of them that went to Hawaii. I was awarded the American Campaign Medal.

Was it hazardous? No. Was it combatant? No. Was it important? It was very important at that particular time because that was the supply depot for the Pacific. That is where we started off in Midway and went all the way to Japan.

In England, the same thing happened. You gentlemen were loading up the bombs and things so we could bomb Germany and eventually take over Europe. These were mostly non-combatants that served in England. There have been many, many instances where we have been accepting non-combatants in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We accepted the occupation of Japan in '52. We accepted Germany up to 1955. These were mostly non-combatant. So we have set a precedent, my comrades. All I can say to you is that I think that the time has come that we should give more consideration to the National Combat Service Medal.

If we listened the other day when the head of the Veterans Administration came to our Convention, he brought up the fact that World War II veterans are 75 years of age or more. The Korean veterans are 65 or more. The Vietnam veterans are 55 or more.

It doesn't take a very brilliant man to figure out what is going to happen. I happen to be a World War II veteran. I know that within the next ten years our ranks will be decimated. We have over one million World War II veterans in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I would say we are going to lose about a half million, maybe three quarters of a million between now and then. We have to give consideration of making our organization stronger. If you remember the head of our Joint Chief of Staff the other evening made the comment he was so proud of our service personnel in Bosnia.

He also made the comment that 27 areas of the country, of the whole world, there are veterans there or service personnel serving there. He was proud of all of them. Many of those are not eligible to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Do they have any combat? They would not give them the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, but each and every one has the National Defense Service Medal. We have never given consideration to our service personnel in Eastern Europe who were under the guns of atomic warhead, the submarines that we had in the magazine, where we chased the Russians all over the seas.

Our savior in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, because I don't believe

in a last man organization there will always be conflicts, there will always be veterans and not necessarily will be veterans that will join our organization. As far as I am concerned, we should reach out to these veterans.

There are over ten million who have earned the National Defense Service Medal with overseas duties, and we can either do it now or we are going to do it later, but we are going to eventually do it. I ask that you accept M-11.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Dominic. Before we continue the debate, I am going to ask the Chairman to read M-11 so all the delegates understand what we are talking about here.

Mr. Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I apologize for not reading the proposal submitted by the Department of Connecticut. It is Section 101 - Eligibility

"Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by adding at the end of the section, a new eligibility category as follows:

"National Defense Service Medal - 27 June, 1950 to a date to be determined (30 consecutive days or 60 days not consecutive duty outside the continental limits of the United States)."

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE FRANK MARTIN (Post 4750 - Oregon): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Frank Martin, Post 4750, Department of Oregon. I speak in opposition to this proposal. As an active military member of the United States Air Force, I was awarded the NDSM in the service of Korea, but at the same during the cold war, Desert Shield operation, and sometime afterwards, approximately 8,927 people went through basic training at Lackland Air Force Base were granted that same medal.

You can figure approximately 45 to 55 percent of them went overseas later, but not before the award of the medal. There is no way in this proposal that you can verify that these people who have the NDSM have 30 consecutive days overseas service. I speak in opposition to this proposal. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Don Linscott, Post 1603, Ogden, Maine. I also rise, as I have done so for the last 18 years, in opposition to this particular recommendation. I really hate to disagree with my fellow comrade Dominic. We seem to agree on most everything else.

However, the foundation of our organization is built out of all kinds of pretty little things that history tells us fascinating tales and the knights in the crusades and the reason we joined it because nobody can better understand our language than fellow veterans.

As I have always said before, most of us belong to the American

Legion. I dare say most of us are here and stronger in the VFW because of the individual pride in the Association that we have. If you want to change the name of the organization to the Veterans of Foreign Service, so be it, but as long as we carry the title the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, be proud of it and forget about taking members in strictly to strengthen the organization.

Back in 1952 when I took my obligation, I was told there could be no more award, and that we would reach that day when nobody else is eligible for the VFW, because at that time, gentlemen, there would be a long world peace and that above all is what we are striving for. I hope you will all join me in rejection of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DONALD O'CONNOR (Post 9066 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Donald O'Connor, Department of Connecticut, Post 9066, Franklin, Connecticut. I urge every comrade in this room to vote in favor of M-11.

In 1948, I joined the Navy. After boot camp, I was sent to New London, Connecticut, to train for submarine aircraft. After I reported aboard the US Senate, after the US Conchita was sunk. Another sub, the US Stang came alongside and saved everyone aboard, but they lost several of their own crew, but no medals.

In later years, we lost two more submarines, the Pressure and the Scorpion. These men did not want to die, but they were out there doing their job. I was on another submarine that went through the Kiel Canal in Germany in 1951, and we all receive the European Occupation Medal, which you all know made me eligible to join the VFW.

In later years, I served aboard the fleet ballistic missile submarines, which within a minute could have lost missiles on targets that to this day I don't know what they were. My service, the silent service was constantly out there and as were many other armed forces, and they still are.

Comrades, there were no medals given except one, the National Defense Ribbon. Comrades, given my service and many others in the history of this organization, and many will serve this organization in the manner they served this great country of ours. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glen Gardner, Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I stand in opposition to this by-law change. I think there are a lot of eligible veterans out there that have not been signed up yet. Do I think that our great organization will die away? No.

I think that honest debate should take place in the years to come on how we maintain this great organization not only for the communities that we serve, but for the families that we will still be serving in the armed services in the years to come. However, I have a problem with the National Defense Service Medal in the fact that I believe what will happen is most will not look any further on the 214, other than the medal section, and they

will see the National Defense Service Medal and they will sign someone up.

Then someone will come back later and say, "Well, it happens every once in a while." Now, with the American Theater Ribbon, he didn't serve overseas. That is a problem I have with it. I believe that it should be an honest debate about opening the eligibility ranks up, but this is not the way to do it. I encourage the delegates to vote "no" on this proposal.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE CHARLES THROWER (Post 3838 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Charles Thrower, Post 3838, Department of Missouri. I rise in opposition to this resolution for one reason. We are the elite veterans organization in this country. I would like to see it stay that way. We don't want to change the name of this organization. We are the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I move the question. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You are moving the question?

COMRADE CHARLES THROWER (Post 3838 - Missouri): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT (Post 9972 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Gunner Kent, a delegate from Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona. We fight this every year. I am glad to second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: It has been moved and seconded to move the question. Those in favor of moving the question will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries. We will move the question. The motion is to adopt M-11. Those in favor of adopting M-11 will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the sign of "no". The Chair rules that M-11 is rejected.

Any others to be set aside?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, a point of clarification. M-13 was announced as being approved, and it was approved. Under the Ritual, the Committee recommends adoption of R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7, R-8, R-9, R-10 and R-12. Commander-in-Chief, I move adoption of those.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STAUM (Post 9625 - Minnesota): I will second that recommendation.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion to adopt R-2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12. Seeing no one at the microphones, those in favor of adopting these procedures will signify by saying "aye". Those opposed by the sign of "no". The motion carries. They are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Committee recommends rejection of R-1, R-11, R-13, R-14, and R-15.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Seeing no one at the microphones, they are rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Comrade

Commander-in-Chief, since the By-Laws Committee just went into the Guinness Book of Records, having been here for four straight days, we certainly thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for allowing us to be your Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Let's give them a hand. I think they have done a wonderful job. (Applause) The Committee is discharged. Chairman Jack Carney, thanks for a wonderful job and Vice-Chairman John Staum, thank you.

I will now call on the Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization, Past Commander-in-Chief Ted C. Connell, for his Committee Report.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TED CONNELL: Thank you, sir. My Co-Chairman is John W. Mahan, Past Commander-in-Chief. John, will you come forward. Will the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization please stand within the audience. Thank you very much. We asked that they be here and they are. All who are not here, please turn in your check that you received for expenses. (Laughter)

I will follow the procedures of this Convention and tell you which of the resolutions that we adopted first. I will go to the rejections and the set asides. Our Committee agreed to adopt Resolutions 204 and 206.

Sir, I move the adoption of those two resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion to adopt Resolutions 204 and 206. Seeing no one at the microphones, those in favor of adoption of 204 and 206 will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. They are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TED CONNELL: We have no amendments to any resolutions, but under due consideration we bring to you the rejection of the following resolutions: Resolution 201, we voted to reject. No. 202, reject; 203, reject; 205, reject in favor of 206, which you just adopted.

Resolution 207, reject; 208, reject; 209, reject; 210, reject; 211, reject.

Commander-in-Chief, I move that the Committee's report be adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Seeing no one at the microphones, they are automatically rejected.

Past Commander-in-Chief Ted Connell, Chairman, and Past Commander-in-Chief John Mahan, Vice-Chairman, your Committee is dis-

charged with my thanks. Thank you for a job well come.

We will now have Past Commander-in-Chief Walter G. Hogan come forward for his Report on General Resolutions.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. We have been charged with General Resolutions Nos. 301 through 317. As called for under the procedures, I will read those that have been accepted.

The following resolutions were accepted by the Committee: No. 302, No. 303, No. 304, No. 306, No. 309, No. 311, No. 313, No. 314, No. 315, No. 316 and No. 317. No. 315 is concerned with the commemorative stamp recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the Spanish American War of 1898. That is No. 315.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Moon assumed the chair at this time.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We will set aside Nos. 315, 316 and 317 at the present time, so they can review the matter real quickly. How do you feel about the others?

Back to you, Comrade Hogan.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Comrade Commander, I move the adoption of those recommended, with the exception of 315, 316 and 317, which we set aside.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a second to the motion?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN: I second it.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any discussion on the motion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PAUL CROTEAU (Post 8203 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Croteau, Post 8203, North Port, Florida. I ask to be set aside Resolution No. 312 for explanation and reconsideration.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrade, I can't understand anything that you are saying. Please speak more distinctly into the microphone.

COMRADE PAUL CROTEAU (Post 8203 - Florida): I am Paul Croteau, Post 8203, North Port, Florida. I ask to set aside Resolution No. 312 for explanation and reconsideration.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: It is not under consideration, sir. Your motion is out of order.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: The motion is to adopt 302, 303, 304, 306, 309, 311, 313 and 314.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Do we have a second to that motion to adopt? Did we have it before? I am not sure.

COMRADE GENE MANFREY (Post 6827 - Florida): I would like to

second the motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We have a motion that has been duly made and seconded. Those in favor of the adoption of the resolutions just read, will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. They are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: They tell me I will have to read 315, 316 and 317 in their entirety.

Resolution 315 deals with a commemorative stamp recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the Spanish-American War of 1898.

"WHEREAS, the 100th Anniversary of the Spanish-American War will take place in 1998; and

"WHEREAS, the Spanish-American War marked the United States' emergence as a world power, a status it holds to this day; and

"WHEREAS, 72,339 Americans served in the U.S. armed forces overseas during the war, and 345 were killed in action, 1,577 wounded in action and 2,621 died of disease; and

"WHEREAS, the men who founded the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in 1899 were Spanish-American War veterans; and

"WHEREAS, the U.S. government should recognize this historic anniversary with a well-publicized and far-reaching gesture;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we petition the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee in support of any existing efforts to create a commemorative stamp honoring the 100th Anniversary of the Spanish-American War."

I move its adoption.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144 - Massachusetts): I second it.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any discussion on the motion? You have heard the motion that has been seconded. All those in favor will signify by "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: No. 316 deals with the World War II National Memorial.

"WHEREAS, World War II was one of the great defining events in this country's history when the people of the United States met this threat with an extraordinary display of unity, courage and resolve; and

"WHEREAS, before the war ended, more than 16 million Americans served in uniform and some 400,000 made the supreme sacrifice in defense of freedom; and

"WHEREAS, Congress in 1993 authorized such a memorial and on Veterans Day 1995, President Clinton dedicated the site by sprinkling soil from 14 overseas World War II cemeteries where approximately 160,000 Americas are remembered;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign

Wars of the United States strongly and enthusiastically support the World War II Memorial site location between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall referred to as the Rainbow Pool site; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we encourage swift approval of the revised design concept so that the memorial can be dedicated early in the next century.”

I move for its adoption.

COMRADE LARRY SCUDDER (Post 1273 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Larry Scudder, Department of South Dakota, Post 1273, a member of this Committee. I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: It has been moved and seconded. Is there any discussion? Seeing no one at the microphones, I call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by saying “aye”; all those opposed will signify by saying “no”. The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: The last one is Resolution 317 which provides for the maintenance and upkeep of the USS Maine Memorial in Key West, Florida, by the Department of the Navy.

“WHEREAS, the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana’s harbor in 1898 sparked the Spanish-American War; and

“WHEREAS, a memorial recognizing this event is located in Key West, Florida, and is the property of the U.S. Navy; and

“WHEREAS, in recent times this memorial has not been maintained properly;

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we go on record as being supportive of the continued maintenance of the USS Maine Memorial in Key Largo, Florida, by the Department of the U.S. Navy.”

I move for its adoption.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: You have heard the motion. Is there a second?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): I second it.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? I see no one at the microphones. Hearing no discussion, I will call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by saying “aye”; all those opposed will signify by saying “no”. The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes the report of this Committee. I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman of this Committee, Past National Commander-in-Chief R. D. “Bulldog” Smith, Past National Commander-in-Chief Bob Currieo, and Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of Colorado. Unless I missed something, I didn't hear the Committee read the list of rejected proposed resolutions.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The Chairman said he thought he read the list of rejections. We will now go to the list of rejections that were brought forth.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Comrade Commander, the Committee recommends rejection of Resolutions 301, 305, 307, 308, 310 and 312.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The recommendation is those resolutions read be rejected. Seeing no one at the microphones, the recommendation set forth by the Chairman will stand. Those resolutions are rejected.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF CONGRATULATIONS - 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At this time it is a great honor to introduce the Air Force's 50th Anniversary Award recipient.

Born on September 18, 1947, the United States Air Force has been flying high ever since. For 50 years, it has played a major role in preserving our freedom and democracy. From the Berlin airlift to the air war of Operation Desert Storm, it has fulfilled the hopes and dreams of its founders, and today, from military satellites high above our heads, it is leading the technological revolution in warfare that will ensure America's position as the greatest military power in the world.

At our VFW National Convention in 1948, just one year after its founding, the Air Force Chief of Staff, Hoyt S. Vandenburg said, "The Air Force is flexed for war, yet it is never forgetful of its role as a keeper of peace."

Today as they celebrate their 50th anniversary, the men and women of the United States Air Force can take great pride in what they have accomplished. They were always ready for war if war came, and they have kept the peace.

We are honored today to have with us another great leader of the United States Air Force, General Eugene E. Habiger, Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska. He has the responsibility for all Air Force and Navy strategic nuclear forces.

He began his military career as an Army Infantryman and then switched over to the Air Force. He logged many hours of combat time in Vietnam as a B-52 pilot flying the arc light missions.

Here to accept the VFW Certificate of Congratulations to the men and women of the United States Air Force is General Habiger.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Certificate of Congratulations presented to United State Air Force.

"In special recognition of its venerable status as a highly respected branch of the Armed Forces of the United States and in commemoration of its 50th Anniversary we salute the men and women of the U.S. Air Force who through their patriotism, dedication and service have created the most successful Air Force in history, preserving peace and defending democracy around the world through air superiority.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997."

This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - GENERAL EUGENE HABIGER

GENERAL HABIGER: Thanks very much, John. It is indeed, ladies and gentlemen, a privilege and an honor to stand before you today, to be among so many heroes, patriots, and each and every one of you gave a very significant part of your lives so that America can be free.

For me to come here and accept this award on behalf of the men and women of the United States Air Force, this is a big deal. I will tell you as I was in the back listening to you go through your by-laws, I had no idea that you were such a rowdy group. I am impressed. I applaud you for that.

I would also tell you that I looked through John and your Commander-in-Chief's biographies, and we came in the Army the same year, 1959. He stayed in for over 22 years, and after two years of wallowing at Fort Benning, Georgia, he decided to get out and go the better life.

Ladies and gentlemen, this recognition is a big, big deal, as I said. We are young compared to our colleagues in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. We are young compared to your organization which can trace its troops back 100 years. Our Air Force molded its legacy in the fire of battle in World War II.

We have proven ourselves time and time again in places like Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Bosnia, and very much instrumental with all the other services to help win the longest war this country has ever fought, the cold war. Your support is invaluable. I want to underscore invaluable.

Twenty years ago, two out of every three members of Congress had a military background. Today, two out of three members of Congress do not have a military background. Organizations like yours put the issues that are very important in our national defense on everybody's periscope. What you do with your scholarship programs, your Speak for Democracy program is truly memorable. Our young people today need this.

Ladies and gentlemen, beginning three years ago the services started to teach young people coming into the military core values. We had to teach the young people coming in the military about integrity, loyalty, work ethics, and we should not be teaching those young people that are coming into the military.

Hopefully, with the kinds of programs that you have developed we will not have to do that for many years to come. You hold up what is most dear to us, freedom and equality. You, better than any other group, understand the brutality of war, just what the professional arms means in terms of integrity, loyalty, loyalty goes up the chain of command and down the chain of command.

You understand why we need a credible, strong and realistic military force, both today and tomorrow. You, ladies and gentlemen, have made my life as a senior leader much easier. I salute you for that. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind as the Air Force celebrates its 100th birthday 50 years from now, the senior Air Force leader, probably not me, will stand before you and again say this is a big, big deal. Thank you very much. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, again, General. We appreciate the contributions that each and every member of the United States Air Force does each and every day to preserve our freedom.

PRESENTATION BY MARCH OF DIMES REPRESENTATIVE TO DEPARTMENTS OF MARYLAND AND NORTH DAKOTA

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Service to veterans, service to our communities and service to our nation are what the VFW is all about, and that is why these next presentations mean so much to all of us. This morning we are going to recognize two of our VFW Departments and two VFW Posts for the outstanding contributions they made to the March of Dimes this past year.

Here to make the presentations is Stanley R. Brewer, a March of Dimes volunteer since 1970. During that time he has served in several positions on the greater Salt Lake City Chapter of the March of Dimes, and today serves on its Executive Committee.

In addition to his work with the March of Dimes, Mr. Brewer is also active in many civic programs, including church work and the Boy Scouts of America. His professional affiliations include: Senior Vice-President in Charge of Operations at the Associated Food Stores, Incorporated, here in Salt Lake City, President of the EMC Land Group, and a member of the Board of the Wesco Company.

Please join me in giving a warm VFW welcome to Mr. Stanley R. Brewer of the March of Dimes. (Applause)

MR. STANLEY BREWER: Thank you, John. It is good to be with you this morning. I spent yesterday in Atlanta, Georgia, with a company that was trying to define their mission statement, and we spent most of the day to come up with a few words provided in that statement for a publication.

I walk in here today and I look at what hangs over that door on the right. "We'd Do Anything For This Country." That is short, that is succinct,

and I compliment you for it. It is well said. I might add you have done everything for your country and in working with the VFW I realize that you are still committed to do great and wonderful things.

I serve on the Board of Trustees for the March of Dimes and with me on that Board is P. X. Kelly. General Kelly would have been the logical person to make these awards today, but could not get away from Washington. I want you to know that as a Salt Laker you are very welcome here. We appreciate your coming.

When your people were looking at this as a potential Convention site, we apologized and said that the sidewalks are rolled up at 10:00 o'clock, and your leadership said, "I hope there is not a ceremony because most of our people are in bed by that time."

I am proud to be here with you today and the VFW has been a dedicated supporter of the March of Dimes since its inception by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1938. Henry Ford once said, "You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do." And that's true.

Thanks to your support and the support of the millions of volunteers, we have built a reputation to build on success. Through the combined efforts of scientists, staff and volunteers like you, the March of Dimes has accomplished many life-saving breakthroughs for babies, breakthroughs like polio vaccine, like the intensive care units in thousands of hospitals around the nation for babies, like the surfactant therapy that helps premature babies that was brought about by the March of Dimes funded researchers, efforts of nitrous oxide that saved the lives of babies with lung disorders.

Despite those remarkable breakthroughs, and the fact that the infant mortality rate is the lowest it has ever been in our history, there are 150,000 babies born with birth defects each year. A low birth rate baby is born every two moments.

Together we must continue to work so that these babies, so that every baby gets a chance for a healthy start in life. Thanks, veterans, for standing with us on the front lines and helping to do battle with birth defects and other disorders that jeopardize the lives and health of American babies.

You are our partners and our allies in this fight to save babies lives. Your longstanding dedication to the cause of healthier babies is both moving and appreciated as much so as your service to our country on foreign shores. Perhaps Jonas Salk, the father of the polio vaccine said it best, when he said, "The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more."

We thank you for six decades of work well done, for walking and raising money, in walk-a-thon events across the country, for sending your people as color guards to kick off March of Dimes meetings around the nation, and for all of your time and effort in support of the March of Dimes mission.

We hope that you will accept the opportunity to do more and help the March of Dimes find vital research funds. Whether we look it to our

proud past and the milestones achieved, to the challenges we face today, or to those that we are prepared for in the future, one thing is clear. We can count on the veterans as our dependable citizen soldiers in the fight to save babies lives. Thank you.

I am very pleased to take the opportunity to introduce special people and award them and thank them for what they have done. Vetta Loveland is the national liaison between the VFW and the March of Dimes. There are two categories of awards. One is raising money for the financial support for the March of Dimes.

We have this year back for the second time in a row, and one of several appearances, one of the leading fund-raisers in the nation, the Maryland VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary. We have Thomas Bunting, the State Commander, and Mary Kobal, their Auxiliary President, to receive the award. Mary and Thomas, we cannot thank you enough for the work and efforts that you did to raise more money than any other state in that regard.

Our second place in this competition is North Dakota, the North Dakota VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary. Representing them here is Richard Belling and the Auxiliary President Phyllis Kinsvogel. Thank you, Richard and Phyllis.

The second award offered is that for outstanding support of the March of Dimes mission. These are the people that will let people know what has to be done, let them know what they must do to provide for healthy babies.

The first place for outstanding support for the March of Dimes mission was the Salisbury Maryland Post 194 and their Ladies Auxiliary. With us, we have Jack Lewis, the Commander, and Leigh Riddles, the Auxiliary President. I will have to hesitate here for a moment. Thanks to Jack and Leigh.

The last, but certainly not the least, Post No. 5228, Smiths, Alabama, is number two in outstanding support for the March of Dimes mission, and their Ladies Auxiliary. I am sorry. I don't have their names. Are they with us today? They are. We have the Post Chairman, Bob Wise, and from the Ladies Auxiliary Louise Wise. He said Casey Miner and Mike Stockard are the people that really made it happen. Thanks for being with us today. We love you.

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S SPECIAL AWARD TO MACH 1, INC.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: In recent years, our VFW Calendar Program has grown by leaps and bounds, and much of that success is due to the fine artwork incorporated into those calendars. However, fine artwork costs money and if we had had to pay for all that artwork, the returns from that program would have been somewhat less, and we would not have been able to serve our veterans in the manner they deserve.

The same applies to our VFW Operation Uplink Program, through which we give telephone cards to active duty personnel overseas. The artwork for that card was also given to us free of charge, and that is why I am so happy to make this next presentation.

Please join me in honoring MACH 1, Inc., a company known for its military artwork and its generosity toward America's veterans.

Here to accept the award is the founder and chief executive officer, Paul P. Farsai.

"Commander-in-Chief's Special Award presented to MACH 1, Inc., in recognition of their continued support of the VFW and VFW Foundation Projects." This has been dated August 20, 1997, by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

RESPONSE - MR. PAUL FARSAI

MR. PAUL FARSAI: Good morning. Thank you very much for such a wonderful award. We were very surprised that we were going to receive this. We are very honored to be here. Our contribution is a drop in the ocean. You are the ones that have done it for this country and what we have done is very minor.

We have devoted ourselves for the last 11 years promoting the image, a very, very positive image of the armed forces. We have been recognized by Senators and Congressmen, and the Department of Defense for our contribution in creating a positive image for the armed forces. We were honored to provide their 40th Anniversary Book called "Summer", and last year we were honored for the book for the 50th Anniversary of the Blue Angels called "Blue Angels." Our products are displayed in every exchange worldwide and every museum worldwide. We thank you very much. And, again, I said our contribution is very minor.

The last thing I would like to read to you, and I did not plan to refer to this, it came to my head, I prepared a few words for this beautiful ceremony for MACH 1. These are from the most wonderful people in the country. I brought a copy of our mission statement that MACH 1 has. I would like to read it to you.

"MACH 1, Incorporated, is a publishing company dedicated to serving God and country. We strive to maintain this for our employees, our customers and our suppliers in our country. We are committed to using our imaging and creativity to promote the word of God and the strength of our nation. It would be innovative in our approach to follow the principals of dignity and be a model of excellence."

Again, on behalf of the corporation, I thank you very much for honoring us, to have us here. You have done it all. We are just a small company helping you accomplish what you want.

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S SPECIAL AWARD TO MR. THOMAS KINKADE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Christmas is a wonderful time of year, but what would it be like without Christmas cards, those cheerful, heartwarming messages of love, affection and friendship that bring us all together even when we are miles apart.

It was in that spirit that the VFW began its Christmas Card Program several years ago. Since then it has grown and through it our Departments have raised the funds to support our Veterans Service Program.

The key to success in this program is the quality of the cards we offer, and that quality is based on the artwork which is so much a part of the message the card carries.

We have been very fortunate for the past two years in having the artwork of a nationally recognized artist appear on our holiday cards. Today it gives me great pleasure to present our next VFW award to Thomas Kinkade, who has donated his work to the VFW Christmas Card Program.

Through his unique style of painting, Mr. Kinkade has become known as the painter of light, and his work has also appeared in movies and books, and he is recognized as America's most collected living artist.

It is a great honor for me to present this VFW distinguished award to an artist whose spiritual faith has been the inspiration for his work. At this time I would like to present to you Thomas Kinkade.

RESPONSE - MR. THOMAS KINKADE

MR. THOMAS KINKADE: Thank you. I first want to say that for a group this size and with this many dedicated Americans, to bring an artist from California to the stage is a very brave thing to do. I don't know what it is, but I have been around artists all my life.

There is a word for artists. That word is weird. Artists as a rule are people who have not as a general thing contributed to others, instead have created art for their own benefit. I will tell you it is really a shame because as I think of the role of an artist in our culture, it is very akin to the role of a veteran.

An artist is a protector and a preserver of a way of life. Think of the power a painting can have to touch a life. I mean a movie is created and we go see the movie and for 90 minutes it affects our life. A book is created, and you read the book and it affects your life for a couple of hours, and then we put the book back on the shelf.

A song, we listen to it and it could inspire us, but at a certain point the song is over and you forget about that music. A painting is there forever. It is an heirloom that is in the home, it is passed down from generation to generation. In fact, I often have people come to my shows and tell me, "Gee, I need to get three paintings because I have three children. I want to pass them on."

That is why I love all those Mormon collectors. They just keep having kids, you know, and they keep buying paintings every year, and

Catholics, too. It is wonderful. Art can affect lives, it can touch lives in a deep way. Think back, if you will, some of you World War II veterans, to the impact that the paintings, for example, of Norman Rockwell had during World War II.

You know in the beginning stages of the war some of you remember there was great dissolution that set in in our country. There was almost a sense that, gee, why have we embarked on this great battle? Is this worth the effort? At that time, Franklin Roosevelt delivered his famous four freedom speech.

He outlined four basic freedoms that the war was being mainly fought for: freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Yet when he delivered that speech, there was a sense that those concepts were so lofty and so high and so unintelligible to the average person that people would ask themselves, "Well, gee, what does that really mean to me?"

Then Norman Rockwell had the inspiration to paint his famous four freedom paintings. They brought those lofty concepts down to the place where every person could understand them. Freedom from what? A family gathered around the table at Thanksgiving celebrating the abundance that we have in this beautiful country of ours, freedom of religion, people gathering around worshipping in their own way, each to the dictates of their own conscience.

Freedom of speech, a man stands up at the town meeting and expresses his beliefs, even though perhaps he is saying something that may not be shared by everybody in the audience, but still he has that freedom in this country.

Then freedom from fear, my favorite. I have four daughters and I think of this freedom every night as I tuck them in. Norman Rockwell's painting portrayed a man tucking his children into bed. Underneath the arm of the man was a newspaper, and the headline reads, "Terror in Europe as Bombs Fall." Yet the man tucks his children into bed knowing they are safe and free from fear.

Well, art can present ideas to people and it can remind us of blessings we have in this country. That has been my goal as a man and as a Christian and an American. I have tried from the beginning of my career to share God's life with people.

I was never in a war, I was not born at a time and a place that allowed that experience, but I will tell you I have gained knowledge of the wartime realities through my association with my father. My father was a World War II veteran. He landed on Omaha Beach. He was part of the campaign to liberate Europe.

Last year I had the opportunity to go with my father back to Europe and revisit the scenes of his wartime experiences. In fact, we wrote a book about it, and the book is called "Chasing the Horizon." It will be out this fall. It is a document of two brothers, my brother and myself, who took our father to Europe to relive his wartime adventures.

I will tell you, you have never lived until you have traveled through Europe with a 77-year-old war veteran. That is an experience of traveling through time and seeing things with fresh eyes. I believe that my association with this organization was God inspired, and I am thrilled to have had the chance to be a part of the people who like myself are attempting with their lives to touch others.

Norman Rockwell or myself do the easy part. We paint paintings. That is easy. But you in this room have laid your lives down every day to preserve those same freedoms that we all believe in. I have been called a painter of light and I attempt to share light with my paintings. But you men and women are the people who have kept the light burning in America.

From the bottom of this American's heart, thank you so much for sharing the light. God bless you guys. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will ask at this time the Sergeant-at-Arms to assist me in bringing Thomas Kinkade's father, William, up to the podium. So what I have is a dual presentation that we are making.

The Commander-in-Chief's Award is presented in recognition of his continued support of the VFW Department cooperative programs. This is dated August 20, 1997. It has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief. On behalf of the 2.1 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I want to present to your father this Life Membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars for his great contributions to our country. (Applause)

Normally, the Commander-in-Chief would be here for these remarks, but he is with the Ladies Auxiliary at the present time. So I guess you might say I am in somewhat of a self-serving position right now.

I ask you to please welcome James Chancellor, a Vietnam veteran and a VFW member of Post 6498, who is here to present a military service ring he designed and created in recognition of those who have served in our armed forces of the United States. Mr. Jim Chancellor.

PRESENTATION BY COMRADE JAMES CHANCELLOR

COMRADE JAMES CHANCELLOR: Fellow friends, thank you very much for allowing me to speak with you this morning before making the presentation of our Vietnam veterans ring. Last year I talked to you about unity and the spirit of a warrior, how I felt we were all the same, and it didn't matter what country we fought in or what war, I feel we were all the time. I feel that way today.

Today, I would like to talk to you about responsibility and the possibility of ending these great wars. The responsibility I talked about is that of our government. I think they need to stand tall, search out the truth and answer the questions.

Let me give you an example. In 1970, when I returned home from Vietnam, the steel mills in North Indiana were thriving. A lot of the veterans chose the work force instead of educational benefits. They worked hard

and worked their way up to the middle management positions.

Then there came downsizing and the loss of thousands of jobs. Unfortunately, at that time their GI benefits had expired. I believe any man, any woman, any veteran who has fought for this country during his lifetime deserves educational benefits. Anyone should be able to go to the state sponsored schools any time they want to. This is the responsibility of the government that I am talking about.

I also want to talk to you a little bit about health benefits. I think any veteran that has offered his life for this country, he has lifetime medical benefits, not just service-connected benefits, but benefits for all veterans. I think preventative medicine is the best type of medicine and the least expensive. I think that health benefits should also be extended lifetime to all veterans.

Another part of the responsibility I am talking about is answering all the questions. Our government and its elected officials need to stand up and they need to take the heat if there is any. They need to answer the questions. If there was nerve gas done on the World War II veterans, they need to tell us.

If they know the effects of Agent Orange on our Vietnam veterans, they need to tell us. If they know why our Persian Gulf veterans are still suffering, they need to come to us and tell us. They need to tell us the truth and answer all the questions, and then an organization like our Veterans of Foreign Wars and our government working together can answer the questions.

Now, I would like to talk to you just a second about the VFW. The Veterans of Foreign Wars has fought endless and tireless fights, and I shudder to think what this country would be without our efforts. It is a great organization and I am very proud to be associated with it.

With every great organization comes great leadership. That leads me to the presentation of this Vietnam veterans ring, which is part of the VFW collection. Our now Commander will serve us well. He is a decorated Vietnam Marine veteran. His leader is follow or get the hell out of the way attitude has brought him here to us today.

It gives me great pleasure to present this ring to our incoming new Commander-in-Chief John Moon.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Jim, in behalf of myself and the entire organization, we thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and each and every veteran in this country. I shall definitely wear this ring with great pride and honor. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE JAMES C. GATES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award is presented annually to an individual

or organization that has made extraordinary contributions in advancing veterans' employment opportunities. This year we are deeply honored to present this distinguished award to Kenneth E. Madison, Sr.

Mr. Madison served in the U.S. Army for 28 years and is a graduate of the State University of New York. Since his retirement from the Army, Mr. Madison has served veterans as a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist in the Copperas Cove, Texas, Workforce Commission Office.

In an area of Texas where unemployment hovers at eight percent, Mr. Madison has exceeded the requirements and standards expected as a specialist. With a focus on placing veterans into the work force, Mr. Madison has averaged a remarkable 67 placements a month, which is triple the state average for Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs. Mr. Madison's outstanding efforts have gained him a positive reputation. Monthly, an average of 274 veterans seek his service.

Mr. Madison meets regularly with area employers to promote the unemployment of area veterans. He has assisted in mass staffings of Wal-Mart and the Race Trac Service Station, and set up on-site interviews for veterans with several warehouses outside of the immediate area. Mr. Madison has participated in Job Fairs, Chamber of Commerce events, and Transition Assistance Programs at Fort Hood.

In the past year, Mr. Madison has placed hundreds of veterans into well-paying and meaningful jobs. One of the most productive Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists in Texas and the nation, Mr. Madison has significantly changed the way the Copperas Cove office serves the employment and training needs of its local veterans.

Please join me today in recognizing our 1996 James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award recipient, Kenneth E. Madison, Sr.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award presented to Kenneth E. Madison, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, Texas Workforce Commission, Killeen, Texas.

"In recognition of extraordinary achievement and exceptional leadership in advancing employment opportunities for our nation's veterans and distinguished service in supporting the goals and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997." It has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General. With this award goes a \$1,000 check.

MR. KENNETH E. MADISON: Thank you. (Applause)
(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Nier assumed the Chair.)

VISIT OF LADIES AUXILIARY DELEGATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I am deeply honored to bring to

this podium the lady that I have had the pleasure and opportunity of serving with this year. She has been my counterpart for the ladies. Please give a very warm VFW welcome to our National President from the great state of Illinois, Eileen Tanner.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT EILEEN TANNER: Commander-in-Chief Nier, National Officers, VFW Members, thank you for this opportunity to greet you once more as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

This has been a great year for the Ladies Auxiliary. We have topped \$3 million in our Cancer Aid Research Fund for the ninth year in a row. We continue our gold medal sponsorship of the National Wheelchair Games and we volunteered 2.6 million hours in VA Medical Centers and other hospitals around the country.

As you know, Operation Uplink was my special project this year. I am pleased to report that the Ladies Auxiliary members donated over \$93,000 to this outstanding program. I want to thank you for your efforts to make Operation Uplink such a success, and for your cooperation on the many other joint projects that we do each year. We can all be very proud of the results that we have achieved together.

I also want to extend my sincere thanks to all of you for your assistance to me personally during this past year. I know that many of you were very involved in making my official visits so enjoyable. I particularly want to thank you, Jim, for everything that you did to make this year so pleasant. It has been an honor to serve you. I mean that from the bottom of my heart.

Now, as a token of my appreciation, I would like to present you the American Flag and Convention Banner at this special gathering. It has been a good year and a fun Convention. I am ready to enjoy a little break then I will be and getting back to work with my Local Auxiliary which is 9759 in Love Park, Illinois.

Thank you, Jim, for the opportunity to speak before the delegates. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: With our National President is her Chief of Staff Jane Ziebarth. I would also like to bring to the podium at this time the lady that has been beside me for these past three years, my lovely wife, Kimie. (Applause)

MRS. JAMES NIER: I would like to say thank you very much for the last three years. You guys have been so nice to me. Thank you. You have been so nice to Jim and I, both.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: As the ladies are being escorted down our middle aisle, I would ask my fellow comrades to give these lovely ladies a VFW round of applause. One final time for our National President. Let's hear it. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL

LARGE EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: This year we are pleased to recognize the James River Corporation/Consumer Products Business of Green Bay, Wisconsin, as the Large Employer of the Year.

The James River Corporation/Consumer Products Business of Green Bay, a timber products company, produces national brand name paper towels, napkins, and tissues for retail and commercial use with a work force of 23,000 located throughout North America and Europe.

The James River Corporation/Consumer Products business of Green Bay maintains an exemplary policy of hiring and retaining veterans. Out of 970 employees, there are 390 veterans of whom 11 are disabled veterans. The company's regulations and policies include preference for veterans in recruiting, placement, and promotion.

During Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the company went far beyond their legal obligations by providing its active and reservist employees one week of base pay for every two weeks of military service. An active and ardent supporter of the National Guard and Reserve, they compensated employees for loss of wages while attending their annual active duty training. Moreover, the company supports military retirees by crediting military service toward company retirement.

The James River Corporation/Consumer Products Business of Green Bay is to be commended for its progressive policy of hiring and retaining veterans. The company justly merits honor and recognition by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Here with us to receive the award on behalf of the company is Thomas A. Remondini, Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Green Bay office of the Jobs, Employment and Training Services Division, State of Wisconsin.

Comrades, this citation reads, "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, National Large Employer of the Year Award presented to James River Corporation, Green Bay Mill, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

"In recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997." It has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

It is with a great deal of honor and pride I present this award to you, sir. There is an honorarium for \$1,000. (Applause)

RESPONSE - MR. THOMAS REMONDINI

COMRADE THOMAS REMONDINI: Commander-in-Chief, the

James River Corporation/Consumer Products Business of Green Bay, Wisconsin, thank you for this award. I was also requested by James River Corporation to ask you to wear this tie that represents the Green Bay Packers, because they had heard that the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is from Texas. But I found out this morning he is not a Dallas Cowboy fan. The James River Corporation didn't have all the information correctly.

I would also like to thank the Employment Committee from the State of Wisconsin for honoring us as a recipient of the Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars Award. I want to thank the National Office of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in selecting our company and, most importantly, their continued support of the employment and training programs for making it possible for veterans to receive employment services that are justly due to them for the services that you render to this country at the time of war or at the time of peace.

If it was not for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the two million plus membership, and the 670,000 plus Ladies Auxiliary, we would not have the preference that the veterans are justly due to them. If it was not for these organizations and the people that are members of the organizations, we would not have the laws that protect the rights of veterans in their jobs and in the retraining and the re-employment rights of veterans.

In closing, I want everyone to know that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States continues to live up to their motto by remembering the dead by serving the living. I, too, am a veteran and I am, too, a member of my Post from the Village of Howard, veterans of Vietnam, serving in the Republic of Vietnam.

I want to thank you and also James Erwin, I would like to thank you also very much. This check for \$1,000 has already been earmarked for the homeless shelter in the City of Green Bay, Wisconsin. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL SMALL EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO UNC AVIATION SERVICES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: This year we are greatly honored to present the prestigious VFW National Small Employer of the Year Award to UNC Aviation Services of Milton, Florida, a company whose policies and achievements in hiring, promoting and training of veterans is noteworthy.

UNC Aviation Services is an independent operating subsidiary of UNC, Incorporated, and has the exclusive mission of providing aircraft maintenance and training services. The company has an established record of working with the Department of Defense, several other federal agencies, and 26 foreign governments for the past 25 years.

Working closely with the Job Service of Florida, UNC has filled the vast majority of its positions with veterans. Seventy-five percent of the company's 195 employees are veterans, to include 16 disabled veterans. An excellent employer, UNC Aviation Services is to be commended for mak-

ing use of local veterans employment representatives and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program to hire both recently separated veterans and military retirees.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is pleased to confer the National Small Employer of the Year Award to UNC Aviation Services. Here to accept the award is Paul D. Stelzner, the company's personnel manager.

The citation reads as follows: Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, National Small Employer of the Year Award presented to UNC Aviation Services, Milton, Florida.

"In recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997." This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Thank you so much, sir, for all you do for this country's veterans. Along with this is an honorarium for \$1,000.

RESPONSE - MR. PAUL STELZNER

MR. PAUL STELZNER: It is a great honor and privilege to accept this prestigious award for all our employees. Ladies and gentlemen, we have one of the finest group of veterans working for us. Since 1981, until today's date, they have provided the company 1.1 million hours of maintenance free accidents, and that is a record that has not been accomplished anywhere before. They are dedicated workers. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL LOCAL OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We are honored to recognize the Goldsboro Job Service Office of Goldsboro, North Carolina, for our National Local Office of the Public Employment Service Award.

The Goldsboro Job Service Office of the North Carolina Employment Security Commission has excelled in the provision of services to veterans and employees alike.

From July of 1995 to June of 1996, the Goldsboro Office provided job placement, counseling, and other services to over 2,300 veterans. In an area dominated by seasonal, low-paying agricultural jobs, 47 percent of the veterans received at least one referral to a job, 21 percent were directly placed and 28 percent were provided substantial service that led to employment.

In working with local veterans, which included many disabled veterans, the Goldsboro Job Service Office exhibited keen insight and under-

standing of the job market by placing these veterans in a variety of jobs across the state and nation.

During the program year, the Goldsboro Office tirelessly promoted the hiring of veterans through employer visits, promotional telephone contacts with employers, direct mailings, news media, and speaking engagements at veterans and civic organizations. Their staff participated in job fairs and open houses.

Of special note is the office's participation in the Retiree's Appreciation Day at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, and in the base's Transition Assistance Programs, where the staff gave classes and briefings to separating military personnel.

These accomplishments clearly identify the Goldsboro Job Service Office as one that has excelled in service to veterans and one that justly merits recognition by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Here to accept the award is Billy W. Patterson, Lead Local Veterans Employment Representative. (Applause)

The citation reads as follows:

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, National Local Office of the Public Employment Service Award presented to Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, Goldsboro Job Service Office, Goldsboro, North Carolina.

"In recognition and appreciation for meritorious, professional and employment service rendered to veterans.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997."

This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General. (Applause)

With it goes an honorarium for \$1,000.

RESPONSE - MR. BILLY W. PATTERSON

MR. BILLY PATTERSON: On behalf of the staff of the Goldsboro Employment Security Division and the Department of North Carolina VFW, I gladly accept this award and thank you for the opportunity to be here at your Convention. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I would like to call forward the National Contest Chairman, Bob Brady, to announce our Parade Winners.

PARADE WINNERS

COMRADE ROBERT BRADY: The results of the Senior Ladies VFW Color Guard Competition and the Senior Men's Color Guard Competition, the winners of the men's competitions, representing VFW Posts 6933 and 9460 of Darien, Connecticut, the Silent Sixteen.

Come forward for your award, please. The winner of the Senior

Ladies VFW/Auxiliary Color Guard Competition, representing District No. 6, the Department of Arkansas, Fairfield Bay, Arkansas.

The next award is to the winner of our Junior ROTC Color Guard Competitions. Please come forward Griffin High School. Griffin High School represents the Army.

The Junior Open Field Contest VFW rules is also Griffin High School, Griffin, Georgia.

The Junior Armed Drill Team, Griffin, High School, Griffin, Georgia.

Now, the Junior ROTC Unarmed Drill Team is Stebbins High School, Riverside, Ohio.

The Junior Individual Rifle Contest, the male winner is Travis Jenkins, Northside High School, Warner Robins, Georgia. The female winner is Jennifer Grant, Griffin High School, Griffin, Georgia.

You can see that Griffin cleaned up. They have an excellent unit. They were competing against 40 other groups and won the majority of the awards.

The next unit coming in represents the United States Air Force ROTC Program. They are the winner of the Junior ROTC, Riverside, Ohio. The Department of Ohio is their sponsor.

The next award will be to our National Ritualistic Team Champion representing Lieutenant Peter G. Zouck, VFW Post 521, Owings, Maryland. They are the 1996 Ritualistic Team Champion. There will be a National Ritualistic Team competition today at 2:00 p.m. in Room 2 down on the first deck, starting at 2:00 o'clock.

Now, the announcement in regard to the winners of the parade during last evening's Patriotic Rally. The best Senior Color Guard was the Department of Iowa. The second place winner was the Department of Michigan and the third place winner was Aurora Silver Rifles VFW Post 2629, Aurora, Ohio.

The best appearing Senior Ladies Auxiliary Color Guard, the New Jersey Ladies Auxiliary Color Guard. For your information, the second place winner goes to the Arkansas Ladies Auxiliary Color Guard, and the third place winner to the Kansas Ladies Auxiliary Color Guard.

That is the completion of our report. As I said, the Ritualistic Team competitions are at 2:00 o'clock this afternoon in this building.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO JACK A. MACK, QUARTERMASTER, DEPARTMENT OF UTAH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Semper Fidelis is the United States Marine Corps motto. It means always faithful, and it also describes a comrade who is joining us here at the podium to receive the VFW Distinguished Service Medal.

Jack Mack went ashore with the Marines on Guadalcanal in 1942. It was an anniversary of sorts for Jack. He had joined the Marines just one

year earlier, August, 1941. That's right, August. Jack joined up before the Japs attacked. He was ready for them when they arrived and he got even with them in Guadalcanal for the longest and bitterest fought wars, but we won and we went on to win the war.

Jack Mack knows combat firsthand and he knows veterans affairs. For 38 years he has been serving the veterans of Utah and in turn the veterans of America. As the Adjutant/Quartermaster of the Department of Utah, Jack has played a major role in everything that this organization has done and in every victory we have won for America's veterans.

Please welcome a comrade who has always been ready to fight for our cause, Jack Mack, Post 3586, Salt Lake City, Utah. I would like to now read the citation. Joining us at the podium with Jack is Mrs. Mack. It is nice to have you.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Jack A. Mack.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of 38 years of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as a dedicated worker, able administrator and distinguished leader in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the office of State Adjutant and Quartermaster of the Department of Utah, evidencing his exceptional commitment to the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997."

That has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Jack, let me personally thank you for your many years of dedicated and devoted service to this great organization and we wish you continued success. Thank you so very, very much.

RESPONSE - MR. JACK MACK

COMRADE JACK MACK: Thank you very much. It is our fifty-second wedding anniversary on Monday, the 25th.

OUTSTANDING VA HEALTH CARE PROVIDER AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I am pleased to recognize this year's recipient of the Outstanding VA Health Care Provider Award, Mrs. Dee Anna Robert, a registered nurse assigned to the home-based Primary Care Program at the Fresno VA Medical Center. Mrs. Robert, a specialist in geratology and wellness, also serves as a case manager for a number of chronically ill patients. With compassion, understanding and professionalism, she works closely with the veteran's family, creating a positive home-like environment for healing and improving one's medical condition.

Mrs. Robert has also been responsible for introducing the Valor

Nursing Initiative, which is a national VA scholarship program for nursing students. She currently serves as the preceptor for several student nurses from both the Fresno and Dominquez Hill campuses of the California State University.

It is with great pride that I present this year's VFW Outstanding VA Health Care Provider of the Year Award to Mrs. Dee Anna Robert from the Fresno VA Medical Center. (Applause)

I would like to read the citation at this time.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Outstanding VA Health Care Provider Award, 1996-1997, presented to Dee Anna Robert.

"In special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding VA Health Care Provider of the Year.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997." This has been signed by me, James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Mrs. Robert, it is with a great deal of pride and honor I present to you this prestigious award. Thank you so much.

RESPONSE - MRS. DEE ANNA ROBERT

MRS. DEE ANNA ROBERT: I am truly honored. I really didn't do all this without the help of the Fresno VA. I am into wellness and, consequently, I work with elderly people who are stranded in their home because of multiple chronic illnesses. I assess the VA system and the Fresno VA is wonderful.

I sit in there and say, "What do I need to get for my veterans in their homes?" Each department from the VA Medical Center tells me what I need to do and the patient is served. Thank you for honoring me. (Applause)

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: This year we are honored to present the VFW Outstanding Community Health Care Provider of the Year Award to Patrick K. Bohmer of Circle Pines, Minnesota.

Mr. Bohmer is the Voluntary Services Coordinator at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He began his career in 1987, and in that time has turned the volunteer program at the Veterans Home into one of the most vibrant and productive programs in the state.

Making himself available to all veteran organizations, he attends their State Conventions to answer questions and provide information about Veterans Home programs. As a result of a fund-raising effort, his program is self-sufficient.

With an abundance of volunteers who work both day and night assisting veterans, Pat, through his leadership and the efforts of volunteers

has created a variety of recreational and therapeutic programs. These activities include fishing trips, bingo games, craft activities, excursion trips to Minnesota Twins baseball and Viking football games, just to mention a few.

Active in the VFW, Mr. Bohmer also serves as Vice-Chairman of the VFW National Homeless Committee. It is apparent that Pat is highly motivated and committed to helping veterans not only by both his choice of vocation but his personal involvement outside his place of employment.

I am honored to present this year's VFW Outstanding Community Health Care Provider of the Year Award to Mr. Patrick T. Bohmer of Circle Pines, Minnesota. (Applause)

The citation reads as follows:

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Outstanding Community Health Care Provider Award, 1996-1997, presented to Patrick T. Bohmer.

"In special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Community Health Care Provider of the Year.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997." This has been signed by me, James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Mr. Bohmer, it is with a great deal of pride and honor I present you with this award and thank you for all you do for this nation's veterans.

RESPONSE - MR. PATRICK T. BOHMER

COMRADE PATRICK BOHMER: Commander-in-Chief and delegates, I would just like to say thank you on behalf of the staff and residents of the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis. There are probably thousands of other people that are much more deserving of this award than myself. You have humbled me by presenting me with this.

I would just like to say, because the boss is sitting in the audience there, there is nothing too good for those veterans in the Minnesota Veterans Home. I would be remiss if I didn't ask you people if you have any extra dollars, quarters or dimes to donate to the Minnesota Veterans Home, feel free to do so. Thank you very much.

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: It is a great pleasure for me to present the VFW Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award. This is the fourth year that the VFW has presented an award recognizing an individual for their exemplary service as a VFW Health Care Volunteer.

This year's recipient is Mary Gomeringer, who is a member of VFW Post 4876 Ladies Auxiliary in Altus, Oklahoma. She is a highly dedicated volunteer at the Veterans Center in Clinton, Oklahoma. She also con-

tributes numerous hours to the VFW helping veterans in her community.

Mary attends all functions at the Veterans Center assisting those who are unable to help themselves. She visits veterans who are bedridden and those who suffer from Alzheimer's disease. She spends numerous hours shopping for comfort items and gifts for hospitalized veterans during the Christmas holidays. She ensures that each veteran receives a special gift from Santa.

Despite three major operations, Mary refuses to slow down her volunteer activities. In addition to her work at the Veterans Center, Mary also volunteers at three local nursing homes, visiting veterans who are residents.

Through her efforts and her handmade gifts of an afghan blanket or stuffed animal, she has greatly improved the morale and the quality of life for those veterans she meets. I am proud to present this year's VFW Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award to Mrs. Mary Gomeringer from Altus, Oklahoma. I would like to read the citation.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Outstanding Volunteer Award, 1996-1997, presented to Mary Gomeringer in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 1997." This has been signed by me, James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General."

Mrs. Gomeringer, it is with a great deal of pride and honor that I present this award to you and thank you for your many, many volunteer hours to our veterans. Thank you.

RESPONSE - MRS. MARY GOMERINGER

MRS. MARY GOMERINGER: I would just like to thank the VFW for choosing me and some people, our Past Commander Bob Magill from Post 486 and Past State Commander, and most of all, my husband of 42 years, because without his help I couldn't do half of what I do. Thank you.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: At this time I will call forward the Chairman of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD OLSON: Commander-in-Chief Nier, I want to thank you for the appointment as Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. I would like to introduce my Co-Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt. Billy Ray Cameron is the Subcommittee Chairman on the POW/MIA, along with Past

Commander-in-Chief George Cramer. I want to thank all of you. To the entire Committee, I truly want to thank you for your input.

I know there are a couple of things that are very controversial and to your credit came out well. Very briefly, I will go through the numbers of the resolutions, and will give you our recommendations, and then I will expect a second to my motion. If I go too fast, you let me know.

I might say this at the beginning. In most cases, those that we recommend to approve, as amended, the amendments were nothing more than accuracy, misspelled words, that sort of thing. It was nothing truly shattering on the amendments.

No. 404, the Lessons of the Cold War, approved. All of these are approved.

No. 405, Limit Foreign Ownership of U.S. Businesses and Properties.

No. 406, Take Action of the Immigration Problem, approved as amended.

No. 407, Time is Running Out for Castro, approved.

No. 408, Punish Terrorists Now, approved as amended. That was just to bring it up to date.

No. 409, Strategic Defense is a Strategic Priority, approved.

No. 410, Honoring Those Who Serve.

No. 411, Oppose Lifting the Defense Department Ban on Homosexuals in the Armed Forces.

No. 412, Maintain an Effective U.S. Coast Guard.

No. 413, Standing Firm for Freedom, approved as amended

No. 414, National Strategy of Peace Through Strength, approved.

No. 415, Halt the Erosion of Intelligence Services, approved.

No. 416, Support for the Republic of Korea, approved as amended.

No. 417, Support Withdrawal from the Former Yugoslavia, approved as amended. Again that is to bring it up to date.

No. 419, Oppose U.S. Forces Under Foreign Command, approved.

No. 420, Support for the Republic of China on Taiwan, approved as amended. That was for purposes of accuracy.

No. 421, An Independent Commission to Study Women in the Military.

No. 422, Retain the Selective Service System.

No. 423, Monitor the Panama Canal Carefully.

No. 424, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Service in Bosnia.

No. 425, Support Legislation for a Special Service Medal for "Atomic" Veterans.

No. 426, NATO Enlargement, approved as amended.

No. 427 is a rejection. I will explain that later.

No. 428, Keeping Faith with American Military.

No. 431, Restore Congressional Control on United Nations World Heritage Sites, approved as amended.

No. 433, Requesting the Naming of the Next United States Ship Carrier in Honor of Lyndon Baines Johnson, approved.

No. 436, Require all Eighteen-Year-Old Citizens to Register for the Draft.

No. 437, Medal Issuance with Combat Action Ribbon.

No. 440, Oppose a Total Ban on Land Mines. I hear you, comrades. We have 440, 441 and 442 that you do not have copies of. We have a limited amount of copies of 441 and 442. The Sergeant-at-Arms might hand them out. There is limited copies.

If you so desire, according to the Convention Rules, I will read 440 and 441. Both of those we have voted to approve. If I read them off now, we can include them in my total motion to accept.

"WHEREAS, recent legislation to ban the use of land mines by U.S. forces was introduced in the United States Senate and supported by a large number of Senators, to include those who are veterans of Vietnam; and

"WHEREAS, television spots to promote the ban as well as celebrities are making an emotional appeal for support, which coupled with the Congressional action are gaining momentum for passage of the ban on land mines; and

"WHEREAS, the reasons most often given in favor of the ban are that land mines caused many U.S. casualties; they continue to cause indiscriminate civilian casualties in many countries (mainly by dumb mines made and laid by other countries); and that land mines remain deadly for many years; and

"WHEREAS, often in the midst of this emotional appeal are the facts that: U.S. forces use 'smart mines,' preset to automatically deactivate after time; with the reduction of U.S. forces, the need for self-destructing mines has increased as a 'combat multiplier;' use of self-destructing mines provide battlefield commanders and troops the ability to protect themselves and limit enemy maneuvers; and

"WHEREAS, the Chairman, Vice Chairman and all members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and all of the U.S. Field Commanders oppose the total ban until a replacement capability is developed or a comprehensive global treaty is in effect; and

"WHEREAS, our military leaders have proposed a ban on 'dumb' land mines with only limited exceptions such as for Korea;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that while sharing concern for the growing humanitarian problems of land mines, we stand with our military leaders and for the continued security of our troops in opposing a total ban on land mines until such time as suitable replacement capability is developed and fielded or a comprehensive global ban can be completed; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we agree with and support the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposal to ban 'dumb' anti-personnel land mines without a self-destruct or deactivation capability and recommend it be made the cornerstone of a comprehensive global treaty."

That was submitted by the Commander-in-Chief and we voted to approve it on the Committee.

Resolution 441, Storage for Fissile Nuclear Materials.

“WHEREAS, the United States, along with 25 other nations in the world that employ commercial nuclear power, have in excess of 150,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel that poses a national security risk as well as an international environmental risk; and

“WHEREAS, this amount of spent nuclear fuel will increase after the turn of the century as reactors reach the end of their useful life and are decommissioned; and

“WHEREAS, this international supply of spent nuclear fuel is largely stored now in temporary steel and concrete containers as well as cooling ponds at the various reactor sites; and

“WHEREAS, the only efficient way of dealing with spent nuclear fuel other than permanent containment is chemical processing which results in the creating of plutonium or other fissile materials such as enriched uranium; and

“WHEREAS, under the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, signatory nations that have nuclear power and have their spent nuclear fuel reprocessed are entitled to the return of the resulting fissile materials such as the plutonium which is produced in that process; and

“WHEREAS, the Russian Federation has underway commercial agreements with Iran as well as Cuba for the construction of nuclear reactors; and

“WHEREAS, the Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense reported to Congress in 1966 that if Iran obtains a nuclear reactor it could develop nuclear weapons within three years which fact has obvious implications for international terrorism; and

“WHEREAS, an American private venture group has developed a comprehensive commercial enterprise to mass produce cost-effective, massive steel containers for permanent storage of international spent nuclear fuel and is seeking authorization to build a permanent above ground storage on an isolated, privately owned American atoll in the Pacific; and

“WHEREAS, the Russian Federation Ministry of Atomic Energy (MinAtom) has been offered a partnership in this American private venture in exchange for not commercially reprocessing spent nuclear fuel as well as not providing nuclear technology to nations whose interests are inimical to those of the United States and Russia as determined by their respective governments jointly; and

“WHEREAS, the Russian Federation will commit to this venture as a means of earning significant legitimate income to ally the dire economic dislocation that threatens democratic development in the former Soviet Union;

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge the Congress and the President to consider legislation that will permit the aforementioned American private

venture to proceed in order to create an American-Russian partnership that will:

“1. Permit the monitored storage of spent fuel from all nuclear power countries in the world under American aegis at no cost to the taxpayers in an isolated and very benign manner on the Island of Wake;

“2. Permit the private American venture to complement, not compete with ongoing federal government efforts to create a permanent storage site in the continental United States;

“3. Foreclose reprocessing of spent nuclear as a commercial venture thereby stopping the proliferation of plutonium and other fissile materials and thus depriving international terrorism of a powerful weapon;

“4. Permit the Russian Federation to receive a legitimate income from a free enterprise venture that will give it necessary, responsible fiscal underpinning at a critical time in that nation’s democratic process.”

That was submitted by the Commander-in-Chief and it was voted to be approved by the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee.

I move, comrades, that those resolutions be adopted as recommended by the Committee.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion for the adoption. It has been duly seconded. Seeing no one at the microphones, those in favor of the adoption will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed by the same sign. They are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD OLSON: The Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs voted or decided on Resolution 427 that was rejected in favor of 428 which you just approved.

No. 434, Ban Manufacture, Sale and Use of Depleted Uranium Weapons, that was voted to reject, and also 442, To Issue the Presidential Unit Citation to All U.S. Navy Armed Guard During World War II. That was voted to be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Seeing no one at the microphones, they are rejected.

Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief Olson, you are relieved of your duties and thanks for a job well done.

I have just been told that the Speaker of the House is on his way, so we are going to suspend the debate on the Committee resolutions. I would like for Jim Rowoldt to come forward to announce the Buddy Poppy winners.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RON DORSEY (Post 856 - Texas): I would like to have clarification on those that you just named for rejection, were just those two resolutions? That was not all of them, was it?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: If I understand it correctly, the Chair related 427 was rejected in favor of 428, and the other one was 434. The Committee is going to handle the others.

NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY CONTEST WINNERS

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT: Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. In the essence of time, I would like to ask the Commanders from the Department of California and also the Department of Minnesota to come forward, please. As many of you are aware, the One Million Club was established a few years ago to pay special recognition to those Departments whose buddy poppy sales and distribution equaled or exceeded one million.

This year's recipients are the Department of California, who led the nation in sales of 1,143,500, followed by the Department of Minnesota with 1,01,000. I would ask that these Commanders come forward with the Commander-in-Chief to receive their special awards.

To the Department of California, over One Million Club, 1996-'97, presented to the Department of California Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation of the Department's support for the Buddy Poppy Program as evidenced by ten consecutive years of over one million in sales." This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

To the Department of Minnesota, over One Million Club, 1996-'97, presented to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to the Department of Minnesota.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation of the Department's support for the Buddy Poppy Program as evidenced by over one million in sales." This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Very quickly, I would also like to thank all of those Posts and Auxiliaries that presented their Buddy Poppy displays this year. I would like to announce that the winners of Category 1, which is the public promotion of buddy poppy sales, window, booth parade displays, sales promotions, the first place was Caseyville Memorial Post and Auxiliary 1117, Caseyville, Illinois.

Second place goes to Post 10188 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Tucson, Arizona.

Third place goes to VFW Post 5221 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Calhan, Colorado.

Category 2, for memorial or inspirational display, first place, Golden Post and Auxiliary 4171, Golden, Colorado.

Second place goes to Elmer Goche Post and Auxiliary 3922, Wadena, Minnesota.

Third place winner is the Robert V. Lindsey Post and Auxiliary 10041, Bethel, Alaska.

Category 3, artistic or decorative use of Poppies, the first place winner is Deer Park Memorial Post and Auxiliary 3067, Deer Park, Washington.

Second place goes to Rogers Rye Post 2283, Russellville, Arkansas.
Third place goes to Roscoe Post and Auxiliary 2995, Roscoe, Illinois.

Category 4, Memorial or inspirational display used by Junior Girls Units and Sons of the VFW Units. The first place winner is McDonald Linn, Chicago Ridge Junior Girls Unit, VFW Post 2255 and Auxiliary, Chicago Ridge, Illinois.

Second place goes to W. Carl Reed Junior Girls Unit, VFW Post and Auxiliary 9095, Little Rock, Arkansas.

The third place winner for the Memorial Junior Girls Unit is Post 5691 and its Auxiliary, Collinsville, Illinois.

We have eight honorable mentions. They are Post 9299 and its Ladies Auxiliary, Alvarado, Texas.

Also Lyndonville Post and Auxiliary 10038, Lyndonville, Vermont.

Category 2, Trenton Post and Auxiliary 7963, Trenton, Illinois. Also Robert E. Stoddard Post and Auxiliary 4343, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Category 3, Paul A. Johnston Post and Auxiliary 2918, Torrington, Wyoming. And Kingman North Post and Auxiliary 10386, Kingman, Arizona.

Finally, Category 4, St. Mihiel Post and Auxiliary 247, Omaha, Nebraska; and the Clarence Hoyt Post and Auxiliary 9217, Liberty, New York.

Thanks to each and every one of you for continued support of the VFW Buddy Poppy Program. It is a service oriented program. Thank you all.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Delegates, the Commander-in-Chief and his officers are now greeting the Speaker of the House, so we will take about a two or three-minute break prior to the entrance of the Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE NEWT GINGRICH, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I am most pleased to introduce our next distinguished guest. Now serving his tenth term in Congress as the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich is one of the most talked about, written about political figures in the nation.

Time magazine named him "Man of the Year" for 1995 saying, "Newt Gingrich belongs in the category of the exceptional. Today, because of Newt Gingrich, the question is not whether a balanced budget plan will come to pass, but when."

Comrades, as you are all well aware a balanced budget did pass and was signed into law early this month.

Forbes magazine said, "Never in American history has a Speaker of the House pushed through so much sweeping, substantive legislation as Newt Gingrich is doing."

Mr. Gingrich co-founded the Congressional Military Reform Caucus, the Conservative Opportunity Society and the Congressional Space Caucus, and has served as Co-Chairman of the House Republican Task Force on Health since the 102nd Congress.

He is acknowledged as the chief architect of the Republican "Contract with America."

The son of a career soldier, Mr. Gingrich taught history and environmental studies at West Georgia College for eight years before being elected to Congress in 1978. We are pleased to have Mr. Gingrich with us this morning. Accompanying him today is Representative Merrill Cook from the Second District, Department of Utah. Please join me in a warm VFW welcome for the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

ADDRESS - THE HONORABLE NEWT GINGRICH

THE HONORABLE NEWT GINGRICH: Thank you, Jim, for that introduction, and I want to thank all of you for allowing me to be here. I want to congratulate you in advance, John Moon, for his promotion and plan that has no obligation to remember since my wife is also a Buckeye, although from the other side of the state. We do have a family tie.

I might point out to all of you, as Jim was telling you, my commitment to and concern for veterans starts with my immediate family. When you are an Army brat, you grow up in places like Fort Riley and Fort Benning, and you spend part of your childhood at schools in places like Orlean, France, or Stuttgart, Germany.

It is driven home to you again and again that America is free because young men and women risk their lives, leave their families, go to distant places, and that it is vital that we remember those who risk everything in order that we and our children can live in freedom.

It is in that spirit that I wanted to come here and share with you some thoughts about national security, about veterans health, about veterans preference, and, frankly, about the kind of country we need to become to be worthy of the sacrifice that was made by so many over recent years.

Let me start by saying that your good friend and mine, a World War II veteran named Bob Dole, asked me to thank you for the warm reception he has always gotten and asked me to report to you that we are going to complete the World War II Veterans Memorial. It is going to be built.

It tells you a little of what is wrong with the politics and bureaucracy of Washington, D.C., that the bill to create a World War II Memorial was signed into law on May 25, 1993. That means that it has already been longer since the bill was signed than the entire Second World War for American forces, and we still have not gotten it finished.

It tells you a little about why we have trouble stopping drugs and winning the war on drugs and why we have trouble reforming education to

make sure our children get educated, particularly our poorest children in the poorest neighborhoods where so often they have the poorest schools.

We can't even cut through the red tape and the politics just to get a memorial built. My dad passed away last fall. He was a veteran of World War II. As all of you know, there are other veterans passing away and we should cut through the tape and get this done and we should take a lesson about what is wrong with the way the federal government works.

That is, is this that complicated and this difficult to do something this good and this simple and this straightforward? As the Speaker of the House, you have my commitment that I will be working with Senator Dole and with the President to make sure this gets done, gets done quickly and that we have the appropriate ceremony opening it in the right way for our World War II generation to recognize that they are being remembered and their dedication and their contribution was vital to the future of not just America but to defeating Nazi Germany and defeating Imperial Japan, was important for the future of the entire human race.

We owe a debt of gratitude to those that spent those years saving freedom as we know it. Also, in the tradition of freedom, I have worked for many years now with Congressman Gerald Solomon on the simple issue of being prepared to recognize that our flag is unique, that it is a symbol that binds us and unites us, and that the flag is deserving of respect and protection.

We passed, once again, the Constitutional Amendment to protect the flag in the House and it is now in the Senate where I believe they are two votes short. I want to commend you and thank you for all you have done in support of the flag of our country.

I will ask each of you when you go back home, contact your United States Senators and ask them when it comes up for a vote in the Senate to give us the right to legally protect the flag within our constitutional system, because it is the symbol of America all over the world. (Applause)

Let me also say that I am going to be joining your organization and writing a letter to the Postmaster General and to his Advisory Committee on behalf of a centennial stamp. It seems to me that it is useful to remind people of things like the issuance of stamps for historic events.

Your centennial in 1999 is an important side of commitment and dedication by Americans serving their country. So I commend you for proposing that. The fact that you had one for your 75th Anniversary should not in any way stop us from recognizing your 100th Anniversary.

You notice when the country needs you, they don't cite procedure for why they have not got the draft, why they are not also going to ship you overseas and why they are not prepared to do things. So, you can also turn to the country and say, "Let's recognize the VFW for 100 years of serving veterans and serving patriotism." I will be working on that.

Let me also say that the United States House has passed a very important bill. Your team in Washington worked on it very hard. That is

HR 240 on veterans preferences. It is inexcusable that as we move into peace time, having won the Cold War, even the Pentagon is not enforcing veterans preference among government contractors. There is something wrong with that.

So we passed unanimously out of the House the reassertion of the importance of veterans preference and the reassertion that contractors have to file they are following veterans preference. It is now in the Senate and with your help we will get it passed and sent to the President to reassert, unlike all these arguments about quotas, set asides and special privileges, veterans preference is an earned preference, earned at the risk of life and limb, earned by leaving your family and earned by serving your country. It is morally right that we insist that veterans be recognized in this way. (Applause)

Let me just note for a second that in addition to veterans of past conquests, one of the things that made the VFW very important is you always have been committed because of your experience to making sure that our young men and women in uniform had the best equipment, the best training.

Those of you who were veterans at the beginning of World War II will remember that on Wake Island in the Philippines, at Pearl Harbor, we suffered a lot because we weren't ready. Those of you who were veterans of Korea will remember Task Force Smith and the fact that young Americans under-trained, under-equipped, frankly found themselves in hopeless situations against a military army in the opening weeks of that war.

You will recognize that it is vital in peace time, as General Washington and later President Washington reminded us, "If you want peace, prepare for war." It is vital in peace that we provide the resources, the leadership and the training, that we buy the equipment so that if for any reason we are required to risk our children's lives in combat they will enter that combat with the best trained, the best equipped force in the world.

I look at the difference between Task Force Smith, brave, patriotic, courageous young Americans. What happened in Desert Storm where we won decisively, convincingly and with an extraordinary great skill, while the Iraqis paid for their lack of preparation. We saved our lives by doing the right thing. I know that all of you will join me in insisting that we have the right defense budget, spent in the right way, to make sure that our men and women in uniform have every opportunity to serve their country and survive. That is what we owe them.

If they will serve us by risking their lives, we should serve them by being prepared. Once you have served your country, and there is no question but we need to invest in resources and we need to do what is necessary for the defense. We have been very committed among House Republicans to make sure we spend money intelligently and we spend it as needed.

Once you have served your country, there is also a question of what happens when you come home and you are a veteran? I have spent

a great deal of time the last four or five years looking at health-care issues. I want to take a minute or two to talk about health care as it relates to veterans and the Veterans Administration.

I want to propose a standard and a Commission to look at that standard that I hope you will agree through this Convention to work with us to get established. This is what I would like to propose. We should have a Commission on the 21st Century health care for veterans, that that Commission should look at all of the breakthroughs, the national general health with the genetic breakthroughs with research, the new biotechnologies, with the new computerizations, and we should say to ourselves how do we design and invest over the next ten years so that every Veterans Hospital and every veterans outpatient care center has access to the best consultants in the world, has access to the best technology in the world.

I have met with an ophthalmologist from UCLA, who is a pioneer in doing very, very specialized eye surgery. He actually does operations in his laboratory at UCLA, in Los Angeles, on patients in Beijing, China. Because his technology is so precise that he can do a better job by satellite than the doctor in China without the modern technology can do standing over the patient.

The Mayo Clinic now, one of the greatest health centers in the world, is investing more and more in providing telemedicine all across Minnesota and all of North and South Dakota, so if you have a car accident or a farming accident, say, with your tractor or combine, you have a unique spinal injury, you just don't go to the local doctor who may see one spinal case in 20 years, you are electronically having all your information sent immediately to the finest specialists in the world through the Mayo system.

That specialist may deal with 10 or 15 cases a week and is looking at all that information and talking to your local doctor and saying here is exactly the most modern therapy available right this minute. Suddenly, you are connecting people not just for the best doctor in your hospital, but to the worldwide capability to bring the most cutting edge of knowledge right to the point of contact for your particular needs.

Now, there is no reason that we can't have for the veterans in this country a nationwide, even worldwide capability to connect you and your local Veterans Hospital where you and your local veterans outpatient clinic, not just the best person at the VA, but the best researcher in the world with your particular problem.

As we are learning, for example, in looking at the Gulf War syndrome, sometimes a local doctor doesn't have a clue. Then you start talking to someone else who has done advanced research and they talk to someone else, and suddenly a whole lot of things come together that you didn't have with one veteran in one hospital talking to one doctor.

What I would like to do, and one of the reasons I was so delighted when you gave me the opportunity to come here, I would like to announce today launching a 21st Century veterans health-care initiative, working directly with the VFW to create the kind of Commission that has the best

medical researchers and the best medical systems in the world represented, so we can develop over the next two years an ability to think about how we bring to bear the best care.

Let me give you an example. We have been doing a lot of study on preventative care. My mother-in-law is now in her eighties. She is a diabetic. Now, I became fascinated, because over 20 years she has monitored this. Some of you may have done the same thing.

Let me ask the question, if you don't mind sharing this with your neighbors, how many happen to be diabetic? That means it is very common. Type 2, when you get older, is increasingly common. It is part diet and partly genetic. I was fascinated because she has really been trained to take care of herself and measures her blood sugar several times a day, and she gives herself insulin, and she exercises.

So I began to talk to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, a great research institution. They reported to me, first of all, that diabetes leads to going blind, it leads to heart disease, it leads to losing your kidneys, and it can lead to where you have to have your feet amputated.

One out of every four dollars spent in Medicare relates to diabetes. That is how prevalent it is. What is even more amazing, if you have the right preventative care and tested and find out as early as possible whether or not you have diabetes, and half the people that have diabetes don't know it. We have eight million diabetics today and our estimate is there are eight million more, including some of you, who have not been screened. We don't check for it automatically.

So often you have diabetes for six or seven years before you learn about it. By the time you learn about it, you learn it because you have a heart problem or eye problem, or kidney problem. Here is what they told us. If we diagnose it early and if you learn how to take care of yourself, 90 percent of the people who go blind will not lose their eyesight.

Now, how will that make a difference in your life? Nine out of ten are going to go blind next year don't go blind. Two out of every three will lose their kidneys and have to go on dialysis, but they don't have to lose their kidneys if they have the right care. Two out of three who have heart disease, and end up in Intensive Care, or may have to bypass or ultimately will have a heart transplant, may die because they have a heart attack without knowing about it. Two out of three could be saved. Two out of three had their feet amputated could be saved.

What is it worth? It turns out, by the way, not only is your life better but we save the money, because if we don't have to send you for the dialysis, we don't have to pay for it. If you don't go blind, we don't have to give special supplemental Social Security income for going blind.

If you don't lose your feet, you are not in the hospital getting fitted because you are now an amputee. If you don't have heart disease, you don't end up in the Intensive Care. It turns out you get better quality of life at lower cost by doing the right thing, and yet almost nowhere in America do we do the right thing.

What I am suggesting, when I talked about the 21st health care, is not just science and research and all that, but it is also what do we already know that we are not applying that will improve the quality of life? One out of every ten of you will end up having diabetes.

Therefore, it is very important that we have preventative care. We are moving ahead with preventative care on other issues, involving not only cancer and other things, because we believe that it is very important, as early as possible, to get the detection.

Let me again ask for a show of hands. How many of you have been through some kind of early cancer where you caught it in time and you were able to have intervention? These are the kinds of preventative approaches and techniques that modern science made possible.

We are not talking about some explosive cost, we are talking about the less expensive system because people are healthier because they do the right thing early instead of waiting for the emergency.

So I come today to pledge to you my support working with the VFW to create the right kind of Commission to redevelop the best possible medicine in the 21st Century. Isn't that exactly parallel to what I said before about the national security?

If you are young, you ought to have the best equipment and best training to go in combat and the best advantage. After you have served your country, after you get older, you should have the best health care, the best medicine and best technology because you have earned that because of the risk that you have taken for your country. (Applause)

Let me also say that we are committed to industry resources. This year we added \$600 million for veterans health care. We know that is not enough. We know the federal government by itself will never fully be enough and that is why we are working in finding new ways to provide for third-party payment to Veterans Hospitals.

We will be launching a pilot project to develop a Medicare policy so there will be care at the VA Hospitals. If we had the best care at the lowest cost, we should be able to save Medicare money and also get resources for veterans' care by allowing the two systems to work together, and that would be better for every American.

We will be working with you to develop a pilot project on how to make that successful and how to learn to increase the resources that are available in your local veterans medical system. We think that is the right way to do it.

Let me in my closing remind you in a sense what a marvelous country this is and what you have achieved in your lifetime with the risk that you took and by being involved. You know, you are here as volunteers. You are here because you care enough to take the time to spend the money to work in your local organizations or the local VFW, to work in your state organizations, to come to your national.

You are here because you know what freedom is really all about. It is being willing to work, and that if America has been good to you, you

have an obligation to find fellow Americans to be good enough and most of you find yourselves visiting other veterans who are not in as good of health and may not have succeeded as well economically and may be a little lonely.

You know when you visit them at times it changes their lives because you have offered them hope and you have offered them human connection that makes them feel better. I spent yesterday and the day before in San Diego and Los Angeles, huge cities on the edge of the Pacific.

I saw just the extraordinary diversity of America. Those who are from those areas and have been there know what I am talking about. You see people with Asian background. That is a too narrow line. It is different in Cambodia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Indonesia, or the Philippines.

You can lump them all together as Asians, but there is a lot of different cultures and a lot of different things. There are folks with the Latino background. It is also a little disconcerting for me to say Brazilians are Spanish, because they are not that Spanish.

European descent, I happen to be German-Scotch-Irish. Many of you are of European descent and to find out that Newt is not exactly a Swede. The old reigning Italians are not Norwegians. This gets to be a much bigger category. African-Americans and West India have African descent for the American.

Native Americans, I mention this to all of you because I think that sometimes we don't stop a minute and look around and smile. This is the most remarkable country in the history of the world. If you are serving in Bosnia and Serbia and you may hate each other, you may have three generations of families killing each other, but when you migrate to America you both end up in the same neighborhood and your kids both go to the same school, they both end up on the same football team or soccer team or baseball team.

They don't fight over the families past hatred, they put on the same uniform and go out on the playing field and play as one team. They worry about beating the other team. Suddenly, magically, they just work together. As you know, there are great American stories of them suddenly deciding to marry each other and the families have to accept that.

That is called love. It happens all the time. We somehow come together and I have always believed that what you represent, and maybe this is because of my dad's 27 years of serving in the Army, but what you represent is the patriotism to protect that freedom and the citizenship after you leave the military to continue to be active because you cared, not because you have to.

You are not drafted into the VFW, not because it is your career, you are not paid. But you do it because in your heart you know that your children and your grandchildren are going to have a better country if you honor the veterans, if you remind them of the cause of freedom and if you remind them of when it counts.

We can all pull together as one country and as one country get bet-

ter. Congress should say to you that we honor those who serve America and that we agree with you they deserve the best possible medical care, and we agree with you that their children deserve the best possible equipment and best possible training so we can continue to protect freedom, so we can continue to show the world what a great country filled with good people can do, to give everybody of every background their creator and their chance for happiness.

Thank you for all you do. We appreciate very much working with your leadership on these very important issues.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: My fellow comrades, we are going to continue through with the Business Session. We have a lot of work to do yet. So, please, bear with us. We will not be taking a break for lunch. We have got two more Committee Reports and the nominations. That will end our Business Session.

I will ask to come forward President Betty Gibbs and the Executive Director Susan Shoultz.

VISIT OF NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT BETTY GIBBS: National Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Members, thank you, Commander Jim, for allowing us to come before this assembly to say a few words. I would like to extend from myself, for the Board of Trustees and the staff an invitation at any time to visit our National Home.

At the National Home, our children receive more than a roof over their heads. They are given love, security, guidance and raised with traditional family values. We wish to thank all of you for the support that you have given us over the years.

From all of us at the National Home, we do have this little remembrance from us, Commander. Will the trustees, please, stand who are here. I don't know if I can see you. From District 3, Allen Jones. From District 8, Ed Sanders. From District 9, Carol Weber, who is Vice-President. From District No. 11 is Charles Cloud, Jr.

Now, I would like to introduce our Executive Director Susan Shoultz. I know she has a few words to say and she will introduce Chris Feltner, our Buddy Poppy Boy for this year.

REMARKS BY DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS SUSIE SHOULTZ

MRS. SUSAN SHOULTZ: To our Commander-in-Chief, Officers, and to you, the fine comrades of this organization: I am here to report to you that we have had another good year at the National Home. We have served 86 individuals over this past fiscal year.

We have finished under budget in terms of expenses and over bud-

get in terms of revenue this year. That is the second year in a row. So we are on a good trend here. The Board and I realize this is not the time to sit back and rest. This is the time to plan for the future, to address the issues that need to be addressed in order for us to continue the mission.

That mission is caring for children and continuing as a living memorial to those like yourself who went when this country called. We want to continue to remember you and that is part of our mission as well. I want to thank you for the support that you have given to the Buddy Poppy Program, which obviously helps the children at the National Home.

I would also like to thank all Departments, every Post, and each individual who has worked this past year to help provide for the children of the National Home. We are grateful for your hard work and your continued commitment to the National Home and the children.

Now, of course, I have the opportunity to introduce to you one of our children, a young man who came to us three years ago. I will let Chris tell you all about himself. Chris is a fine example of how you are helping young people. I would like to present to you your Buddy Poppy Boy for 1997-98, Chris Feltner. (Applause)

REMARKS BY BUDDY POPPY CHILD

MR. CHRIS FELTNER: Hi. My name is Chris Feltner. I come from Waterford, Michigan. I have been living at the VFW Home for three years. I am nine years old. I like science, math and social studies. I have one brother and one sister. Their names are Gregg and Renee.

I also have a cousin, who is named Eric. He is turning 13, August 20th. I have a house parent whose name is Audrey. He is very nice and he takes good care of me. One of my friends at the VFW Home is Michael and he likes to camp as I do. I met a friend by the name of Chuck. He is a nice guy. He did Elvis lip singing and wore funky clothes, and has got Elvis sideburns. He did Elvis with me.

My old house parent, Pat and my old house parent, Gary, and my brother and my sister, in the fall we rake leaves and jump in it with Sue, Audrey and Pat. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: He will be around to get any pins you might have. He is a smart young man. We will move on with our business now. I will ask to come forward the Chairman of the POW/MIA Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron.

REPORT OF VFW POW/MIA SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Thanks, Commander. Once again, I would like to thank Commander-in-Chief Nier for giving me the opportunity to serve as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on POW/MIA. My Vice-Chairman, George Cramer, did a great job and I would like to thank the Committee.

We had a good, hard working Committee, and we worked diligently and went through these resolutions. So what I will do at this time is read the resolutions that the Committee approved, and then I will save for last the ones that were rejected. Some of these were approved with amendments. The only amendments made were to correct figures and dates, and things like that. There was nothing that changed the resolutions.

The first resolution is 401, Support Public Awareness Projects. This resolution was approved by the Committee.

The second resolution was No. 402, Seek Opportunities to Resolve the Korean War POW/MIA Issue. This was approved, as amended in the dates.

The next resolution was No. 403, VFW Supports Kuwait's Demand for an Accounting of its MIAs. This resolution was approved by the Committee.

The next one was Resolution 418, Assist Vietnam's Recovery of MIAs as a Sign of Good Faith. This one was approved.

The next one that was approved was Resolution 432, Americans who are Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. This was approved by the Committee.

Resolution No. 435 is approved by the Committee, support for the POW/MIA Flag to Fly Over Federal Post Offices and Federal Buildings. That was approved, as amended.

The last resolution that was approved by the Committee was taken up this morning as we reconvened. That was Resolution 443, Oppose Downsizing the Defense Department POW/MIA Office. That was approved.

So, Commander, I make a motion we approve these resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER (Post 6869 - Illinois): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion duly made and seconded to adopt those resolutions. Is there anyone at the microphones. I will call for the vote. Those in favor of adopting will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. They are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: The Committee decided to reject Resolution 429, De-Normalization of Ties with Vietnam.

Also we rejected Resolution 430, Withhold Aid Until Full Accounting of POW/MIA's. That was rejected for Resolution 402, which we approved. This was rejected for Resolution No. 402.

Resolution No. 438, House Resolution 409, was rejected by the Committee.

No. 439 was rejected in favor of 435 which we approved. No. 439 was POW Flags Be Flown on All Federal Buildings.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Is there anyone at Microphone No. 1? Is there anyone at Microphone No. 2?

Yes, Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RON DORSEY (Post 856 - Texas): Commander-in-Chief, Ron Dorsey, Post 856, Texas. On behalf of my 200 members I would like to make a motion that we accept Resolution 438.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: There is a motion to accept No. 438.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE TONY BORGAS (Post 2866 - Missouri): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We have a motion and a second to accept Resolution 438. We will now debate No. 438.

COMRADE RON DORSEY (Post 856 - Texas): Gentlemen, to accept this motion is a no brainer. All this resolution does is to reinstate those pertinent specifics that were clipped out of the original Missing In Action '96 by Senator John McCain. I will read to you briefly what will be reinstated by the support of this resolution.

The requiring of new base files personally every three years for thirty years, and penalizing those which willfully withhold information and those that direct withholding information about the case. It reinstates the provision that if the recovered body is not identified by visual means, certification to exempt is required.

It is broadening the definition of new information to the appointment of legal counsel for this purpose, when a renewed or new material is made. The establishment of a by-law for Korean unaccounted for, or when last known alive or expected of being alive.

Gentlemen, all this resolution does is to reinstate those things. By reinstating these elements, you are supporting your POWs and their families. Not to do so is basically to support the politicians who really don't give a damn about us. So, if you are sincere about it, and I will tell you we asked the Committee members why they chose to reject this and they had no reason.

This is another reason why you need to question your Committee members. You need to have members who are relatively informed. If you are sincere about supporting the POWs, I hope you are because they have got a fight, then you will accept this resolution as part of our policy. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Anyone else at any other mikes? There is no further debate.

Yes, Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of Colorado. This issue is really not well known to me or probably most of us. Can we have the Committee comments why they voted to reject, please?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Yes. The resolution was very, very unclear. The wording was very unclear, and we had a letter from the Department Commander, which I will ask our Vice-

Chairman to read, explaining exactly why we opposed it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Commander-in-Chief and delegates to the 98th National Convention: I beg your indulgence because this letter is a little lengthy. It is from the general counsel of the Department of Defense and the Honorable Floyd Spence, Chairman of the Committee on National Security, with a copy to our Washington Office.

It says: "This is in response to your request for the views of the Department of Defense on HR 409, 105th Congress, a bill to amend Title X, United States Code, to restore the provisions of Chapter 76 of that title relating to missing persons as in effect before the amendment made by the National Defense authorization and for the fiscal year 1997.

"The Department of Defense proposes HR 409. The Department considers certain aspects of HR 409 as detrimental to the full accounting of missing persons. First, we do not support coverage of our civilian and contract employees. The Secretary of State was tasked to conduct a study to determine the impact of that provision and until this analysis is complete, it is premature to include these personal categories.

"Second, we do not support reinstating a requirement of the Unit Commander to make a preliminary status report within 48 hours rather than the ten days as currently legislated. Field Commanders must be briefed to prosecute their wartime duties. Reducing a Commander's time from ten days to 48 hours is unrealistic in any given best scenario as a Commander's full attention is on the battle.

"Consistent with the legislation's intent to render a full accounting, sufficient time must be allowed for those most familiar with the missing person's status to ensure a thorough investigation. In this instance, thoroughness is more critical than speed. The extension of reporting requirements of 48 hours to ten days will allow a thorough and complete investigation.

"Third, the Department of Defense does not support the requirement for Unit Commanders to transmit preliminary status reports through a Theater Component Commander, TCC, rather than directly to a Service Secretary. We believe this requirement would tax the TCC and his staff and thus becoming a further combat distraction. In the event of a major conflict, this provision would severely detract the war effort.

"The Commander's report should be continued to be forwarded to the Service Secretary for action, with the TCC being provided advisory copies. Although we object to routing the Commander's report to the TCC, we would support a requirement to provide the TCC with advisory copies.

"Fourth, while the Department supports current law which requires the inquiry after the end of one year and thereafter upon the receipt of new information, it opposes the requirements to convene Status Review Boards every three years for thirty years even absent the availability of new information.

"This presupposes that the U. S. Government does not hold the interest of missing persons as a compelling factor for determination of their

status and also implies that a proper evaluation is germane and new information would not be made. We believe this requirement would be financially and administratively burdensome on the Department and would cause unnecessary suffering and travel expenses to family members and would send an improper messages to the services that will not pursue cases unless there are formal hearing processes.

"Lastly, the Department disagrees with the provisions on penalties for wrongful withholding of information. Criminal provisions could be used as means for filing frivolous, false and spurious charges against innocent government employees who would then be obligated to undergo the stress and expense of defending themselves.

"With the emotional nature of this work, our personnel are often accused of withholding information from their case files of missing persons. Such allegations in the past consistently have been proven groundless. Attaching criminal liabilities to such charges would create a working environment where recruitment and retention of personnel would be severely affected.

"It also would require personnel to spend time and resources aggressively defending their conduct rather than working to resolve their differences. This would create an environment which would jeopardize analytical objectivity. The language of HR 409 also implies the lack of trust and professionalism with regard to Comrade Commander, the analyst, the service casualty officer and other personnel involved in the POW/MIA issue.

"The investigative and legal burden that this criminal provision is certain to impose will have a debilitating effect on the process of the POW/MIA issues. The Office of Management and Budget advises that from the standpoint of the administration's programs, there is no objection to the presentation of this report for consideration of the Committee."

That is why we rejected this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Any further debate? Seeing no one at any microphones, the motion is to adopt No. 438. Those in favor of adopting No. 438 will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. No. 438 is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Let me again say thank you to the Commander-in-Chief. I want to tell everyone here today that the Veterans of Foreign Wars is still the lead organization in the POW/MIA issue. I had the privilege and opportunity to travel to Vietnam and it was not a vacation. It was a hard-working trip. You would have been proud of your Chief.

When we gave the North Vietnamese the documents for location of over 1,600 graves, there was all kinds of TV and print media that covered this event. I think it spoke well for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for giving me this opportunity. Thank you, George Cramer, my Co-Chairman.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RUSSELL RIEKE (Post 5694 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Russell Rieke, Post 5694, Department of Illinois. I need just a point of information from Billy Ray. You said Resolution No. 429 was rejected in favor of which resolution?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: No. 429 was rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you very much, Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray. I thank you and your Vice-Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer. Your Committee is relieved of its responsibilities. I thank you for a job well done. Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause)

At this time I will call forward the Chairman of the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions, Past Commander-in-Chief Allen F. "Gunner" Kent.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT: It is better late than never. Commander-in-Chief, I would like to report that the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions convened at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, August 17, 1997. The instructions were read and roll call was taken and preliminary matters were discussed.

The Committee was divided into three Subcommittees to help deliberate the 71 resolutions which were assigned to this Committee. The Subcommittees were established as follows: Subcommittee 1, Medical Programs and Veterans Benefits Entitlements was chaired by Daniel Crocker from Michigan, and the Vice-Chairman was Richard Branson from Georgia. The staff advisors were Dennis Cullinan and James Jewel.

Subcommittee 2 was chaired by Gary Herbert from Alaska and the Vice-Chairman was Sam Rosenthal from Utah. The staff advisors were Sid Daniels and Bill Frazier.

Subcommittee 3 was on Other Benefits, and that was chaired by Tom Hanson of Minnesota and the Vice-Chairman was George Householder from Ohio. The staff advisor was Bill Dozier and Jim Magill.

Before proceeding to this report, comrades, I would like to take a moment to express the Committee's appreciation to Fred Juarbe, Jr., Director of National Veterans Service, Sid Daniels, Director of National Employment Service, and James Magill, Director of National Legislative Service for their valued technical guidance to the Committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Norm Staab, from the great Department of Kansas, for serving as Vice-Chairman of this important Committee. A special note also of thanks to Jimmy Lee Wallace, Special Assistant to the National Veterans Service, who acted as secretary of the Committee and coordinated the results of our deliberations.

Commander-in-Chief, with your permission, I will begin the

Committee Report by presenting those resolutions the Committee recommends to be approved as written.

Past Commander-in-Chief Staab will then proceed to report those resolutions that were approved as amended. Then I will conclude the report by presenting the resolutions the Committee recommends for rejection. If for any reason you or the delegates to this Convention would like a resolution set aside, please so indicate after I have completed each segment of the report.

I will now proceed by reading the resolution numbers which the Committee recommends for approval as written:

Resolutions Nos. 602, 605, 609, 611, 613, 615, 617, 618, 619, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 630, 634, 641, 653, 660, 663, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670 and 671.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Committee recommends and I move that these be approved as written.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NORMAN STAAB (Post 6240 - Kansas): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The motion has been duly made and seconded for adoption.

Is there any discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM SAUNDERS (Post 579 - Wyoming): Commander-in-Chief, William Saunders, Post 579, Department of Wyoming. I move to set aside Resolution 660.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Resolution 660 will be set aside. Any other discussion on the motion to adopt? If not, those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries.

We will come back to Resolution 660 at the end, Bill.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT: I would like to call on Past Commander-in-Chief Norman Staab, and he will read the resolutions that were approved, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NORMAN STAAB: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Approved as amended, and most of these were really grammatical errors and they were just corrected. We have Resolutions 601, 603, 604, 606, 607, 608, 610, 612, 616, 620, 633, 637, 640, 645, 658, 659, 661, 664. That is all of the resolutions that have been approved as amended.

I move we accept these, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The motion has been moved and duly seconded to adopt these resolutions, as amended. Seeing no one at any of the microphones, those in favor of adopting these resolutions, as amended, will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed by the same sign. They are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT: Finally, I present the last series of resolutions, which the Committee recommends rejection, or rejects in favor of another resolution. I will read the resolution number again. If a delegate would like any of these resolutions to be set aside, make a note of the resolution number and request such action after I have completed the report of the final group of resolutions.

No. 614 was rejected in favor of 601.

No. 626 was rejected in favor of 669.

No. 627 was rejected. The action urged by this resolution is technically unsound. Also, this is a private organization and not a federal organization. Therefore, this is not a federal legislative issue.

No. 628 was rejected in favor of 618.

No. 629, Request Establishment of a New U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Out-Patient Clinic in Northern Virginia, the action urged by this resolution has been accomplished.

No. 631 was rejected in favor of 671.

No. 632, Change Surplus Appropriation Rescission Act to Public Law 79301, rejected in favor of No. 620.

No. 634, Oppose Abolishment of Veterans Employment and Training Service, was rejected in favor of No. 668.

No. 636 was rejected in favor of No. 668.

No. 638 was rejected in favor of 637.

No. 639 was rejected. The action urged by this resolution may be increased veterans benefits.

No. 642 was rejected in favor of 616.

No. 643 was rejected in favor of 616.

No. 644 was rejected in favor of 665.

No. 646 was rejected in favor of 625.

No. 647 was rejected in favor of 603 and 608.

No. 648 was rejected in favor of 609.

No. 649 was rejected in favor of 620.

No. 650 was rejected in favor of 664.

No. 651 was rejected in favor of 622.

No. 652, the action urged by this resolution is not within the jurisdiction of a National Committee.

No. 654 was rejected in favor of 668.

No. 655, due to a situation change in this area, the Department of California no longer feels this is a priority issue.

No. 656 was rejected in favor of 625.

No. 657 was rejected in favor of 634.

No. 662 was rejected. The action urged by this resolution is against long-standing VFW policy to support medical care for the allied veterans of the United States. Those are your rejections.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the list. Seeing no one at the microphones, those resolutions stand rejected.

There was a motion to adopt Resolution No. 660, which was set

aside. We will now debate 660.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM SAUNDERS (Post 5769 - Wyoming): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that we reject Resolution 660 on the basis that it is a Veterans Affairs realignment and should have been —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The motion is out of order. There is a motion already on the floor. You can speak in opposition. We are now debating No. 660. Bill, there is already a motion on the floor to adopt. You can speak in opposition. You can't move to reject it, but you can speak in opposition.

COMRADE WILLIAM SAUNDERS (Post 579 - Wyoming): I speak in opposition to that resolution simply for the fact that I sat on this Committee and in the original Committee Report we had moved to reject this specific resolution, and then resurrected it to bring it on the floor.

I believe that this is a program that should have been handled by the Minnesota delegation of Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Director in that specific area, which happens to be Minneapolis.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Department of Colorado): In the Committee, I will make this very briefly, it concerns really dealing with the national resources, and I am speaking in opposition to the motion. I would like to focus on it just briefly.

I ask you to reject Resolution 660. The issues contained in there concern the facilities in the Department of State of Minnesota, and we know that those comrades are still very sincere and very concerned about what is happening to the VA Medical Centers there.

We hope they can accomplish what they would like to accomplish to serve our comrades and sisters at the Department level using local community support and the political resources of the Department of Minnesota.

The question is can our National Office staff, with limited resources, take all of these issues throughout the United States? We have thousands of similar issues to deal with. We have many in our Department of Colorado, in the State of Colorado.

If we want to increase our National Office staff by ten or twenty-fold, then, yes, we can work on these issues. But we cannot expect this very limited staff to try to resolve each and every one of these issues at the local level. I think it is a local issue.

I think that the Department of Minnesota is going to be fully capable of dealing with it and I, therefore, ask that this motion be defeated. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 4847 - Minnesota): First of all, Commander-in-Chief, I would like to set the record straight on this resolution. It is not a parochial issue. Our hospital at St. Paul cares for over 1,000 patients. We are noted for our psychiatric treatment.

We are noted for our post-traumatic stress syndrome program. We are known for our gerontology program, our outpatient treatment, et cetera. We take veterans from all over the country in St. Cloud. Our opposition to this is the staffing question of the Director being brought in from Minneapolis to manage our facility two days a week and the remaining days of the week will be operated under the direction of a CEO of some sort.

I believe that we are dedicated as a veterans organization to make sure that we represent the veterans that we have in this nation and that need our help and need it so badly. This idea of coming out and bringing forth the argument that because we support the issue that affects two hospitals that is completely two different missions.

I just alluded to the programs that we have in St. Cloud. In Minneapolis, 80 miles away, we have a GMS hospital called General Medical Surgical. We don't do any surgery up in St. Cloud. We send them to Minneapolis. The question we have with this, and with the Department of Veterans Affairs, is simply this.

We are concerned about the administrative structure that is being proposed in this integration movement. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move for the best interest of all veterans that this resolution be approved.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: There is a motion already on the floor.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RICHARD BRANSON (Post 5080 - Georgia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Richard Branson, a delegate from Post 5080, Department of Georgia. The basic question in here is whether we want full continuum care for veterans or whether we want to micro-manage where this care is going to be provided.

The resolution that we have already passed was Resolution 601, which was Reform of Eligibility for Access to VA Health Care, and we are requesting that legislation be enacted to mandate the full continuum care. I don't think that it is our place to tell how that care will be provided or where it will be provided, just so long as it is provided.

I believe the secretary agreed on this very same point. I think that we should reject Resolution 660 in favor of Resolution 601.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DANIEL CROCKER (Post 796 - Michigan): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. My name is Dan Crocker, a delegate from Michigan, VFW Post 769, Port Huron, Michigan. I stand here with my colleague from Georgia in opposing this resolution.

We stood here where you stand right now, and heard the Secretary-Designate make some promises to us yesterday, and those promises dealt with change within the VA. I have to question that in terms of the mission change. It is not a change of mission, it is a change from inpatient to outpatient.

We have all seen it in our private sectors where we may go in the hospital for a gall bladder surgery as an outpatient. And years ago it was four or five days. Now it will be two days and you are up and walking in one day. In the VA, we have to look at it this way, the VA is getting out of the hospital-care business and getting into the health-care business. That is very important as we deal with this issue.

Those promises that he made yesterday was to expand health care and not to diminish the quality of health care. How did he propose to do that? He did that with excess points. Throughout the nation, some of our states already have those outpatient clinics already in place and up and running.

Michigan has four of them right now and other states across the nation are getting on line. So yesterday I had the opportunity to go to the VA workshop. During that workshop, this integration came about, and every one of those individuals that spoke on integration had nothing but positive remarks regarding integration of medical centers.

Our Committee, when we met, our initial contact or our initial decision, as the comrade from Wyoming just said, we rejected in favor of 601 and we still look at that favorably.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE FRED JUARBE (Post 401 - New Mexico): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Fred Juarbe, Jr., VFW Post 401, Albuquerque, New Mexico. The purpose of integration is to provide more accessible health care and better health care. The primary effort in integrating services is to do away with the top heavy positions, duplicated services and increased services that can be provided in the arena of health care to veterans facilities.

If you have two Directors who are making in excess of \$100,000, one in St. Cloud and one in Minneapolis, and you can remove one of those positions and dedicate some of those funds to direct clinical services to veterans, the purpose of the VFW is to provide greater service to veterans is accomplished.

Our national office has established a technical assessment center asking all the comrades to provide input of the impact for major changes that are taking place within VA health care. We have asked them to provide that input so we can correct any problems, track any expense and bring this evidence to the Secretary of Health and the Under Secretary of Health and to Congress where additional resources are needed.

We will be monitoring the impact and if done correctly by being able to provide visiting physicians from Minneapolis to conduct special clinics at St. Cloud, services will be improved to the veterans up there. Those are the things that we will be monitoring and we are convinced that opposing the integration of St. Cloud and Minneapolis or any other integration that can improve service to veterans and improve access to health care would be against everything we are doing.

We want to allow the VA to streamline themselves, to monitor

themselves and gear itself up to provide health care to all of our nation's veterans. With that, Commander-in-Chief, I urge that Resolution 660 be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you. Seeing no one at any of the mikes. the motion is to adopt Resolution 660. All those in favor of adopting 660, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed by the sign of "no". No. 660 is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT: Thank you very much, comrades. I would like to thank very much the Veterans Service Committee for hanging in there for three days. Will you stand up. I would like to thank you for your hard work on the Committee. Thank you very, very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Gunner. Past Commander-in-Chief Gunner Kent and Vice-Chairman Norm Staab, your Committee is relieved of its duties and I thank you for a job well done. Thank you very much.

Microphone No. 1, please.

COMRADE KENNEDY (Post 3877 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Kennedy, Post 3877, Minnesota. I would like to move for reconsideration of No. 206. I seriously doubt if the members realized that if this goes through they will be stepping into a position to admit the Merchant Marines.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LARRY MAHER (Department of Missouri): Did the comrade vote with the majority on that?

COMRADE KENNEDY (Post 3877 - Minnesota): It was a unanimous vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 4847 - Minnesota): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: There is a motion to reconsider Resolution 206 that has been duly seconded.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE KENNEDY (Post 3877 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, with respect to the motion, it was a unanimous vote and, therefore, it can be brought back to the floor for reconsideration. I seriously doubt if the members would carefully read that resolution, which would put us in a position as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of approving the admission of the members of the Merchant Marines into our organization, that they would turn it down.

This morning we turned down a resolution to reject members who were eligible for the National Defense Medal, and certainly I think that they were in a better position to be admitted than members of the Merchant Marines. Thank you kindly for your attention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. You have heard the debate.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE STAN LOWE (Post 9439 - Wyoming): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I speak in support of Resolution 206.

COMRADE JOHN VRITJAK (Post 1612 - Illinois): A point of order. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Jack Vritjak, Post 1612, Department of Illinois. I have a point of order. When the rules of the Committee were presented, I believe that if you look at Item No. 13 it stated that no motion or resolution passed at a previous meeting can be reconsidered at the following meeting without previously giving notice.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I don't believe that is correct. I believe it can be the same day. It was done today.

COMRADE JOHN VRITJAK (Post 1612 - Illinois): The resolution was presented yesterday, was it not?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: It was today.

COMRADE JOHN VRITJAK (Post 1612 - Illinois): I am sorry. I stand corrected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Continue with your debate.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE STAN LOWE (Post 9439 - Wyoming): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Council in the State of Wyoming. I am not appearing here in any official role, but I want to share with the comrades something here today. The results of my study of this question about the service of the United States Merchant Marines.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LARRY MAHER (Department of Missouri): Comrade, the matter before the house is just the motion to reconsider at this time. You should confine your remarks to the motion to reconsider rather than on the merits of the underlying motion.

COMRADE STAN LOWE (Post 9439 - Wyoming): I am sorry. I will withhold my comments at this time.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT (Post 9972 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we are talking about a moot point, because whether this resolution is accepted or rejected, By-Law B-9 and M-9 were rejected, which cover the Merchant Marines. They can't get in if we do this resolution or not.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): There is a point of order on what Gunner Kent just said. If you remember correctly, comrades, last year the same thing was done with Korea. There is a charter change. That is only done this year is a charter change.

Once the Congress changes that charter, they would be accepted. If what Gunner said is true, then you would have to have voted the by-laws out for the members of Korea, because you were approving them the same last year and you didn't vote anything for them this year.

The same thing will happen again. So this particular motion on this resolution has already been adopted, will actually allow the organization once the Congress has approved that.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LARRY MAHER (Department of Missouri): I am not arguing with you, Ron. Your point is well taken. Gunner's point is well taken. Just so we get this thing off on the right foot, the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure amendments that would have tried to admit members of the Merchant Marines under the by-laws failed.

Resolution No. 206, it failed primarily because — let me back up. There is no provision in the charter that would permit members of the Merchant Marines to be in this organization. Resolution No. 206, which was passed this morning, although perhaps inadvertently, would require that the Commander-in-Chief go to Congress and petition for a change in our national charter to permit the admission of Merchant Marines.

Following that, assuming that was done, there is at least an argument, and I think it is a valid one, then the organization would have to consider whether it wanted to amend its by-laws to permit Merchant Marines to enter or not because I believe that we don't have to have by-laws that admit everyone that the national charter will permit. That is an argument for a different day.

Aside from all that, the only issue on the floor right now is the motion to reconsider, and we probably ought to confine our remarks to the motion to reconsider. Once that is taken care of, then we will deal with the main motion.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Could I ask you just one question? Is it not true that the supreme power of this organization is vested in its charter?

COMRADE LARRY MAHER (Department of Missouri): No, the supreme power of this organization is vested in this Convention which adopts by-laws. I don't really prefer to get into this discussion now, Ron, because of some technical reasons.

It is possible that, for instance, and I will give you an example, we have in our by-laws a citizenship requirement for membership in this organization. That citizenship requirement is not in the national charter. It is not in the congressional charter. So we have a more restrictive by-law than our present congressional charter. That is the same argument that applies.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT: Also, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, regarding by-laws, I believe, and I may be mistaken, but I don't believe this resolution was read and I do not believe that the membership understands exactly what this resolution will do as far as admitting Merchant Marines.

I have always been against the National Defense Medal, but yet we are going to let the Merchant Marines come in. We don't have any proof at all except that says they have been somewhere. Some of them may have been under fire, a lot of them have not been under fire.

I think that we ought to look at this and I think the membership should hear this resolution and it should be read in its entirety so they understand clearly exactly who they are going to admit into this organization. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrade at Microphone No. 1, do you want to discuss the motion to reconsider?

COMRADE DALE VERNON (Post 3568 - Alabama): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am a member of this Committee that considered this. I spoke in favor of it. I told them the people in Alabama would be amazed if I supported this, but I supported it for the following reasons.

From early 1943 to October, 1945 —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: My fellow comrade, I hate to cut you off, but you are discussing the merits of the motion and the only motion we are considering right now is to reconsider.

COMRADE DALE VERNON (Post 3568 - Alabama): I wanted to tell them why they ought to admit the Merchant Marines.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: If we pass the motion to reconsider, then we will discuss the resolution.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: I move the previous question for reconsideration.

COMRADE BUFORD MAPLES (Post 5985 - California): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The motion on the floor, which has been duly seconded, is to reconsider the motion. Those in favor of reconsidering Resolution 206 will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed by the same sign. We will not reconsider No. 206.

All of the Committees have now reported. All resolutions have been considered. I thank all the Committees for an outstanding job and all the Committee members.

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: At this time I will take this opportunity to introduce all of the Past Commanders-in-Chief that are registered with us at this Convention. If you are either here in the audience or on the stage, please rise and be properly recognized.

They are Billy Ray Cameron; John Carney; Ted C. Connell; George Cramer; James R. Currie; Arthur J. Fellwock; Robert A. Hansen; Wally G. Hogan; Cooper T. Holt; Richard W. Homan; Allen F. Kent; James L. Kimery; Clyde A. Lewis; John W. Mahan; Robert T. Merrill; Clifford T. Olson, Jr.; Eric Sandstrom; Joseph Scerra; R. D. “Bulldog” Smith; Ray R. Soden; Paul A. Spera; Norman G. Staab; John J. Stang; John S. Staum; Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr.; Thomas C. “Pete” Walker; Robert E. Wallace; and Larry W. Rivers. Let’s give these Past Commanders-in-Chief of this great organization a round of applause. (Applause)

Thanks, Past Commanders-in-Chief for your continued dedication and willingness to serve this great organization.

INTRODUCTION OF SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: At this time we see standing behind me our Sergeants-at-Arms. Let me express my appreciation to a group of men that we see annually at our National Convention. They come here to this Convention and they are up early in the morning and the first ones in the hall.

They arrange for the seating and special occasion, and they keep order in the hall. They try to seat everybody and maintain that order that is necessary during the meeting itself. These folks don't get a lot of money to do this. It is obviously a labor of love for them. I am sure that everyone recognizes that they do an outstanding job for us. The Sergeants-at-Arms, and his assembled staff here, I would like to introduce them.

The Sergeants-at-Arms, from the great state of Pennsylvania, George F. Sarver, Jr. The Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms are from Post 4159, Michigan, Fred Von Hinken, Jr.; from Post 2083, Connecticut, Nicholas Polansky; from Post 1645, Massachusetts, Carl C. Aiello; from Post 6240, Kansas, Barry Hoffman; from Post 4206, Florida, Bill Miller; from Post 2275, California, Keith McDonald; Joe Schirmers from the State of Minnesota; from Post 1911, Dan Brown, the state of Ohio; from Post 9134, North Carolina, Gary Barringer.

These are the gentlemen that every time something goes wrong we start screaming at them. If something goes right, we forget to say thank you to them. I want to publicly say thank you to each and every one of them, the members of this team.

I am so proud of each one of you, and you handle yourselves as professionals. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve with each and every one of you. Thanks so much on behalf of all of us for what you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Let's give them a round of applause.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL LARRY RIVERS: In accordance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I move the minutes of this 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be submitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives for printing as a House document.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL JOE L. RIDGLEY: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion duly made and seconded. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion is accepted.

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We will now go into the Nomination of Officers for the 1997-'98 VFW year. I now open the nominations. By the way, before I start these nominations, if you are going to

make a nomination or a second, please come up on the dais. Please be prepared. Nominations are now open for the Commander-in-Chief for 1997-'98.

I recognize Roger Taylor, State Commander of the Department of Ohio.

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMRADE ROGER TAYLOR (Post 2873 - Ohio): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Department Officers and Distinguished Delegates to this 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

I stand before you a proud man, a proud member of this great organization, a proud friend of a man who has served this organization with distinction at every level. I stand before you for the purpose of placing in nomination for the highest office of Commander-in-Chief the name of a great American and a former Marine. I speak of none other than our distinguished Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon.

John has served with the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam. He has been awarded the Vietnam Service Medal with three Bronze Stars, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and the Combat Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal.

While home on leave from Vietnam, he joined Post 5665, Sherwood, Ohio. Then a few years later, in 1975, he was attracted to Grover Hill, Ohio, by a young lady, and John joined Post No. 2873 in Grover Hill. Since being in Grover Hill Post 2873, he has served three times as Post Commander, twice being named to All State Post Commander, and has served 14 terms as Post Adjutant.

Simultaneous with his Post activities, John found time to serve the County Council and was District Commander in 1974-'75. Demonstrating his leadership ability, he was then elected Commander of the Department of Ohio, the first Vietnam veteran to obtain this high office. John proved his leadership abilities and was named All American and Department Commander. He then went on to serve the organization on the national level as National Council Member, and served on the National Budget Committee as well as several other Committees.

In civilian life, John has served four consecutive terms as Mayor of his small rural community. Under his guidance, the town implemented many initiatives which resulted in numerous improvements. He participated in many local, regional and state civic activities. John has earned a degree in Business Administration. Our candidate for Commander-in-Chief brings us a well-rounded education, both academically and through life experiences.

Every step of the way during his Veterans of Foreign Wars career, John has been supported by his lovely wife, Susie, and his entire family. Susie is very active in the Ladies Auxiliary and served as the Department of

Ohio President in 1990-'91.

John has served this organization as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief the last two years, representing the Commander-in-Chief and the 2.1 million members of this great organization on assignments all around the world.

John has the dedication, he has the knowledge and he has the Veterans of Foreign Wars in his heart. He will do what is right for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and this nation's veterans.

It is a proud moment for me to place in nomination for the high office of Commander-in-Chief the name of a true American and a veteran's veteran, from Post No. 2873, Department of Ohio, John E. Moon.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I recognize John L. Dahman, National Council Member, of Post 1421, Fort Wayne, Indiana, for the purpose of a second.

COMRADE JOHN DAHMAN (Post 1421 - Indiana): Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, Department Commanders and Delegates to this 98th Annual Convention, it is with honor and pride that I stand before you today.

I am going to tell you a little bit about John Moon. John and I became friends about ten years ago. You kind of wonder why a person from Indiana is seconding the nomination for a candidate out of Ohio. I live in Fort Wayne, Indiana, which is up in the Northeast corner of the State of Indiana, about ten miles from the state line of Ohio.

John lived in Grover Hill, Ohio. As you heard, he had been Mayor there for 16 years. Well, there isn't 2.1 million residents in the town of Grover Hill, but if they were here today they would tell you that John Moon is a great leader of his community and will be a great leader of our organization.

I said ten years ago I first met John Moon, when he was campaigning for National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, he was campaigning with Past Commander-in-Chief Cramer. John came over to Indiana, and he knew I was supporting George Cramer at the time, but that didn't stop him from becoming friends and continuing to come back to Indiana.

He came to Indiana many, many times, not just for our conventions and our conferences, but he came over for our camp-outs, our golf tournaments, our bowling tournaments. One time he came to Indiana just to see one of our Past Commanders in the hospital who he was a friend of in Indianapolis. It is a long way from Grover Hill to Indianapolis.

Then John decided, when he was beaten by George Cramer, he supported him and backed him 100 percent. Then John came back out again, and he had Jim Goldsmith and Dwaine Wilson opposing him for National Junior Vice in the Big Ten. John represented himself with dignity, and when he won, he was a very proud winner, but he was also respectful to the two individuals that he ran against.

We all know John, when he became National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, he was on an airline and he got up to get out of his seat and someone opened the overhead and a briefcase fell down on his back and his neck. That gave him quite a bit of trouble.

He was in the hospital quite some time for minor operations, but that never stopped John from going out and working in the different Departments he was in. If you have ever met John, he is a very outspoken person. He is always energetic and he is always ready to go out and get involved with people.

At this time it gives me a great honor to second the nominations for a great American and will be a great leader of our organization. I second the nomination of John Moon for National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I recognize Al Loehr, Past State Commander, Post 4847, St. Cloud, Minnesota.

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 4847 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Past Commanders-in-Chief, Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars:

It certainly is a distinct honor and privilege to be here today to stand at this podium to second the endorsement of a man who has labored hard and is a true and dedicated individual, coming from modest beginnings to the high office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I have known this man for many, many years. I have tested him and I found that one of the most important attributes he has is the wonderful demeanor he has, even though things get rather serious at times in our great organization. I look forward to hearing and seeing him run for the Senate in the halls of Congress and speaking to the President of the United States regarding the concerns and issues of our great organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

John Moon will go down in history as one of the great leaders of our organization. I am proud and honored to stand here today in front of all of you and express my total support to a great incoming Commander-in-Chief, John E. Moon, from Ohio.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Are there any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief? Once, twice and three times. The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

Nominations are now open for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN (Post 1116 - Montana): Commander-in-Chief, I am John Mahan, and it is my privilege as Past Commander-in-Chief some 39 years ago that I nominate my friend and associate from Helena, Montana, Thomas Pouliot, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief now, to the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Tom is from a family that all have been VFW members, the father, his mother in the Auxiliary, and he has ten brothers and sisters. That is the reason he has to be tough. If you are a child with eleven in the family, you better fight and win to succeed, which he has done.

Tom entered the Navy. Upon his release from the Navy, he attended college. He graduated from San Jose State College in California, and then went to Montana and graduated from the law school with a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree. He was Post Commander of Post 1116, then District Commander, All-American State Commander.

He has been Chairman of the Legislative Committee and a member of most Committees, and has worked throughout the years on the Voice of Democracy and the Loyalty Day programs. Tom was elected last year as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. In my opinion, he has done an outstanding job and will continue to do an outstanding job as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, which I now nominate him for. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I must apologize. I didn't announce that the man that made his nomination was John W. Mahan, Past Commander of Post 1116, Helena, Montana.

I will now recognize for a seconding speech Past Commander-in-Chief Eric Sandstrom, Post 969, Tacoma, Washington.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ERIC SANDSTROM (Post 969 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, a year ago I stood in front of this podium in Louisville, Kentucky, and said I was very, very solemn that a Marine would nominate a little swabby as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Well, I have to admit that I was a little wrong. A swabby he will always be and that is fine. But little, no, I was wrong. In my mind and heart, he stands very, very tall.

I also said a year ago that he had a cute wife. I was absolutely right. It is a great honor at this time for me, a Marine, to second the nomination of Tom Pouliot, who is a tall, tall swabby, as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of this great organization.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I recognize for a second George F. Riedel, Past State All-American Commander, Post 969, Tacoma, Washington.

COMRADE GEORGE RIEDEL (Post 969 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Past National Commanders, Officers and Delegates to this 98th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars:

It gives me a great deal of pleasure, personal pleasure, to second the nomination of Tom Pouliot for the office of National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. We have all enjoyed and certainly respect the counsel that Tom has provided to our Posts, our Districts and our Departments during this past year.

We certainly look forward to his tenure as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I must admit that I do empathize with Eric and the Marine Corps, as a retired member of the largest organization of fighting men in the United States, the U.S. Army, we, too, recognize the qualities of

our super swabby. So let's put Tom where he belongs in the office of the National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Once, twice and three times. Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

Nominations are now open for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I will recognize Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson, Post 8699, Milton, Massachusetts.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD OLSON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, I come before you today to place in nomination the name of a deserving and dedicated comrade, John W. Smart, to the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-chief. He enlisted in the Army, and I will not make any comment about who is the best or whatever by the previous speaker.

He enlisted in the Army when he was still in high school and was immediately shipped to Vietnam. He served with the 176th Assault Helicopter Company in Chu Lai, the American Division, earning the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with four Bronze Stars.

At 19 years of age, while still serving in Vietnam, he joined the Fuller-Covey Post No. 2181 in Exeter, New Hampshire. Like the rest of us, John was still young when he returned from Vietnam, and he decided to do as many before him had done, he decided to enjoy life to the fullest. He did.

While enjoying this life, he knew there was a debt to be paid. He knew he had a duty to perform, that debt and duty was one and the same. He knew he had to help others. He chose to help people in general by becoming a firefighter. He chose to help veterans in particular by becoming active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

This comrade's history needs to be told, because there may be some who are unaware of his true dedication to helping others. He became active in Post 2181 and was elected Post Commander in 1976. He went on to be named Captain of the All-State Team of Post Commanders.

In 1979, he transferred to Post 483 in Nashua, New Hampshire. This dedicated comrade continued to work and make his mark on the system in the Department of New Hampshire. His knowledge and dedication to the purposes and ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars did not go unnoticed. The members of the Department of New Hampshire saw fit to elect him to the office of State Commander, the first Vietnam veteran, and the youngest person ever to have been elected to that high office in New Hampshire.

Under his leadership, the Department of New Hampshire excelled, and he was named an All-American Department Commander. This com-

rade has served well on many committees and in many capacities. He served as the National Chief of Staff and three times he was the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Buddy Poppy Committee. He served on the National Youth Activities Committee. He was Chairman of the Eastern States Conference and administered various other assignments and positions.

While carrying on these duties, he found time to serve as the Department Adjutant since 1985, and then he continued in the capacity of Quartermaster since 1990.

Besides his activities in the Veterans of Foreign Wars on behalf of the nation's veterans, he continues to be concerned for his fellow citizens in New Hampshire. He was elected to serve as a State Representative, and while in that capacity served on the Committee for Public Protection and Veterans Affairs.

He was selected by then Governor Sununu to serve on the Board of Managers of New Hampshire's Veterans Home and he continues to serve that home as the present Chairman of the Board of Managers.

While serving veterans through his active role in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and his civic involvement as a State Representative, this dedicated comrade continued to work full-time as a Nashua firefighter for over 20 years.

I have shared with you his dedication to the veteran, I have spoken of his knowledge and of his devotion to duty, and I have mentioned everything except the only thing that outranks his desire to serve the VFW.

I want to let you know he has a wife, two married children, John, Jr. and Cheryl, and three grandchildren, Chelsea, Taylor and Damon. I might also add that he has a tremendous amount of support from his entire family, and particularly his wife, Mary, who is extremely active being a Past State President and currently serving as the State Secretary.

This comrade will be a credit to the great Eastern Conference. He is dedicated, knowledgeable and possesses the desire and indeed the ability to lead the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States into the next century.

It is my distinct honor and a personal privilege to place in nomination for the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 1997-1998, an outstanding comrade and friend from the great State of New Hampshire, Post 483, John W. Smart.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I recognize for the purpose of a second John M. Packard, Past State Commander, Post 8546, Salem, New Hampshire.

COMRADE JOHN PACKARD (Post 8546 - New Hampshire): Chief and National Officers, and especially our past National Chiefs, it is a pleasure and honor for me to second the nomination of John Smart. I have nominated John for positions through the District and State Department.

He has always been a credit to the state and well-qualified. I salute him. It has been an honor as my adopted son. He is a young veteran, and

anything under 80 is young.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I recognize for the purpose of a second Robert W. Madigan, Past State Commander, Post 483, Nashua, New Hampshire.

COMRADE ROBERT MADIGAN (Post 483 - New Hampshire): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates to the National Convention:

It is an honor for me to stand here today to second the nomination of John W. Smart for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Once, twice and three times. Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning. Nominations are now open for Quartermaster General.

I recognize for the purpose of a nomination William J. Radigan, State Adjutant-Quartermaster, Post 3061, Vermillion, South Dakota.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Comrades of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

I appear before you today for the purpose of making a nomination for the office of Quartermaster General. I am joined here today by my comrades that have served in the same office that I do as the State Quartermaster-Adjutants in various states. I would like to introduce them at this time.

They are Cleve Cox from the Department of North Carolina, Darrell Bencken from the Department of Kansas, and Dave Roath, from the Big Ten Conference. Also retired Bill McCarthy, my friend, from the Department of Massachusetts. We have with us also Stan King, the new Quartermaster-Adjutant for the Department of Massachusetts.

Twenty-one years ago, a young Vietnam veteran with a degree in Business Administration from the University of Missouri applied for employment at the VFW National Headquarters. His application was reviewed and he was found to be the type of individual that they wanted to hire.

He served for a year as manager to the Accounting Department at the National Headquarters. They recognized that this young man had potential and in 1976-'77 they appointed him as Director of the Life Membership Per Capita Tax Department. He served us well.

In 1985, they had an opening where they needed a very competent individual to fill a position, and they chose the person I am going to nominate. He served for six years as Director of the VFW Emblem and Supply Department.

In 1991, the organization needed an Assistant Quartermaster General. With all the experience and the things he had done, the way he

had done them, they chose the person I am going to nominate.

In 1995, all of us gathered at the National Convention took it upon ourselves to elect him as Quartermaster General. He has done a great job. So, this afternoon, I am honored and I feel it is a great privilege for me to nominate the individual that has been educated for his job, who has been trained in the operation of this organization by holding almost all of the leadership positions in the Quartermaster General's Office, who has served for four years as Assistant Quartermaster General and then now has served us for a number of years as Quartermaster General.

The people like me, that come from small places, some of you have never heard of Vermillion, South Dakota, find it is a great honor to nominate such an individual for an office in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. It is a great privilege for me this morning to nominate Joe Ridgley, Post 8220, Belton, Missouri, for the office of Quartermaster General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: For the purpose of a second, I recognize David L. Roath, State Adjutant-Quartermaster, Post 5606, Kansas City, Missouri.

COMRADE DAVID ROATH (Post 5606 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

It is indeed an honor and privilege for me to stand before you today to second the nomination of an outstanding and dedicated comrade. This is a comrade who is presently serving us as our Quartermaster General for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Joe has been faced with some controversy since assuming the office of Quartermaster General, but he has faced these controversies with one thing in mind, that was to do what is best for the organization. I know that Joe will continue to do what is in the best interest of our organization no matter what the controversy may be.

It is an added pleasure for me to second the nomination as Joe is a member of my Department, the Department of Missouri, where he is a Life Member of VFW Post 8220 in Belton, Missouri. I, along with the other Department Quartermasters of the Big Ten Conference, the Southern Conference, the Eastern Conference and the Western Conference, represented here today proudly second the nomination of Joe Ridgley as Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Are there any other nominations for the office of Quartermaster General? Once, twice, three times. Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

Are there any nominations for Judge Advocate General? I recognize for the purpose of a nomination Dominic Romano, State Quartermaster, Post 7330, Oakville, Connecticut.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): My comrades, I stand before you very proudly to present one of Connecticut's finest for the position of Judge Advocate General, Brian J. Kennedy. Brian was born in Brooklyn, New York.

He was educated and went to college there and as a sophomore he joined the United States Marine Corps. He served with distinction in the Marine Corps and eventually went to Vietnam. He received many decorations. One of them, of course, was the Vietnam Service Medal.

Upon returning from his stint in the Marines, he went back to school to earn his law degree, and he then moved to Connecticut in 1980. He joined the Putnam Veterans of Foreign Wars Post. He served in every capacity in that Post, including Post Commander. He served the District through the chairs and also he became our District Commander. He served our Department as the State Inspector and, of course, as the Judge Advocate.

It is with pride and pleasure I present to you from Connecticut for Judge Advocate General Brian Kennedy.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: For the purpose of a second, I recognize Donald O'Connor, State Commander, Post 9066, Franklin, Connecticut.

COMRADE DONALD O'CONNOR (Post 9066 - Connecticut): Thank you, Commander. When I wrote these notes of what I was going to say good morning, comrades, but I cannot do that. I have to say good afternoon. It is a great honor to stand before you at this podium. I never thought I would get this far, but here I am.

I am not here for me but to second the nomination of Brian Kennedy for the high office of Judge Advocate General. I have known Brian Kennedy almost 20 years. He has been a member of my District, District No. 4. He has served with distinction throughout the years.

His wife, Irene, has also served with distinction, and she is now serving as the Department Chaplain for the Ladies Auxiliary. This is a truly VFW family and Brian Kennedy will be a great asset to the Moon-Pouliot-Smart team. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Are there any other nominations for Judge Advocate General? Once, twice, three times. Hearing none, the nominations are closed. The nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

Nominations are now open for Surgeon General. For the purpose of a nomination, I will recognize Wayne J. Thompson, Jr., State Judge Advocate, Post 5061, Denver, Colorado.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Good afternoon, comrades. My name is Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, State Judge Advocate, former Judge Adjutant General from the Department of

Colorado. I appear here today to nominate our next Surgeon General, Henry F. Sexauer, for the 1997-'98 term.

Hank is a Life Member of VFW Post No. 1, Denver, Colorado. He has been very, very active in the affairs of the Department of Colorado. Hank has an outstanding record of medical and health-care services.

Hank enlisted in the U.S. Army Medical Corps on August 29, 1939, and served in the Panama Canal Zone, Southwest Pacific and in the Philippines. He was discharged on October 29, 1945. Hank then enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force Reserves and continued as a member for 25 years.

He was called back on active duty in January, 1973, to assist in the deactivation of the 136 Medical Units of the Air Force Reserves. Hank retired from the U.S. Air Force Reserves in September, 1979, as Chief Master Sergeant E-9. Hank has a long extensive career in the medical field, including providing a full range of direct health-care services to patients.

He serves as a hospital administrator for the U.S. Public Health Service, assigned to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. He has been a real health-care professional and has the mental, physical capacity, experience and dedication to make an outstanding Surgeon General.

Hank is also fully committed to veterans and their families. I do hereby nominate Henry F. Sexauer as Surgeon General and ask for your vote. Thank you very much, comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: For the purpose of a second, I recognize Frank Harris, State Commander, Post 5231, Mancos, Colorado.

COMRADE FRANK HARRIS (Post 5231 - Colorado): Thank you, Commander. Greetings to all of our National Officers, Past Officers and to our comrades out there. It is with great pleasure to second the nomination for Hank Sexauer to become our National Surgeon.

This guy has been a leader from the day one, as Wayne just read off to you. He is a doer. He has got the same attitude he has when everybody was called to action many years ago in the Second World War, he felt he had a job to do then and he has done it.

Hank has got that same attitude today. Never once has he dropped the ball when he has a job to do. He has always completed it. It is with great pleasure that myself and the Department of Colorado second the nomination for Hank Sexauer as your next National Surgeon General. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Are there any other nominations for Surgeon General? Once, twice, three times. The nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

The National Chaplain designee has requested that his nomination take place in the morning and the chair will respectfully recognize that request.

If there is nothing further to come before this session, I will call on the National Sergeant-at-Arms to perform our Closing Ceremonies.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Bleiler gave the Benediction at

this time.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: We will resume business at 9:00 o'clock a.m. tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 1:30 o'clock p.m.)

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 21, 1997

(The Fourth Business Session of the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I call this Business Session to order. I will ask the National Chaplain to please come forward and offer the Invocation.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain William J. Bleiler gave the Opening Prayer.)

SALUTE TO COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(Whereupon, the National Sergeant-at-Arms led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.)

FINAL REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: At this time I will call forward the Chairman of the Credentials Committee for his final report, Chairman Richard Trombla.

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Chairman of the Credentials Committee from Department of Kansas, Post 1174. Comrades, this is a final report at this Convention with the total delegate strength.

Total delegates, 12,724; Department Commanders, 54; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 27; National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 12,843.

Commander-in-Chief, this is the final report of this Committee and we want to thank you for the privilege we have had working with you and we ask you to dismiss us at this time.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS OF
NATIONAL CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I would like to introduce the members of the Credentials Committee so they can be recognized, please.

First, we have the Chairman, who just reported, Richard Trombla, from Kansas; from Delaware, we have Elwood B. Rickards; from Illinois, James Mascola; from Minnesota, James Kennedy; and from Missouri, James H. Willis. I thank all you gentlemen for an outstanding job. I think you

deserve a round of applause. Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause)

At this time I dismiss the Committee on Credentials and thank them once again for a job well done. Thank you, gentlemen.

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL A. SPERA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: "Call to Duty" was the theme of the comrade who will join us here in just a moment, and under his leadership during the 1995-1996 year we answered that call. As our Commander-in-Chief that year, Paul A. Spera met the challenges facing veterans and led us to victory after victory.

From veterans health-care eligibility reform to a shut-down of the federal government that also threatened veterans, Chief Spera met each problem head-on, and led the way in answering the "Call to Duty."

Paul joined the VFW in 1966, while he was still serving in Vietnam with the 39th Signal Battalion. Even then he was very good at getting a message across. Back in the States, he quickly became a very active member in VFW Post 144 in Boston, Massachusetts.

Two terms as Post Commander, followed by a year as District 2 Commander, and then in 1982-'83, Paul served as Department Commander, and he wasn't just a Department Commander, he was an All-American Department Commander.

In August of 1995, at our National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, he was elected VFW Commander-in-Chief. Almost immediately, he expressed VFW concern about our troops being sent to Bosnia, and that, as you know, is still a major concern of ours. Though skeptical of the policy sending them there, the VFW supports those troops 100 percent and toward that end Chief Spera made a personal visit to Bosnia, and while there handed out the first Operation Uplink phone cards.

Personal and meaningful involvement in everything he did was the trademark of his year as Commander-in-Chief. Under his leadership, the VFW reached new milestones and set new records. And we are proud to say that we answered the "Call to Duty."

Today it gives me great pleasure to welcome to this podium Past Commander-in-Chief Paul A. Spera of VFW Post 144 in the great Department of Massachusetts, and to present him with the VFW Distinguished Service Award.

I would like to read the citation if I may.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Paul A. Spera, Commander-in-Chief, 1995-'96, in sincere appreciation and special recognition of his total dedication and commitment to the highest ideals to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and his continuing efforts to supports its programs and purposes, to exceptional leadership during the 1995-'96 admin-

istrative year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars demonstrated its ability and willingness to once again answer the 'Call to Duty' for our nation's veterans.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 21st day of August, 1997." This has been signed by James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Paul, it is with a great deal of honor and pride I present to you this citation and thank you for the wonderful job you did as the Commander-in-Chief of this great organization in 1995-'96. (Applause)

RESPONSE BY IMMEDIATE PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA

IMMEDIATE PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Nier. To all of the national officers, and especially to all of you, my comrades, thank you very much for this very high honor. I especially want to thank you for all that you did during the 1995-'96 administrative year to make the "Call to Duty" year any success that it had, is due to the most part for what you did. I want to thank you for all of that.

I especially want to thank you for welcoming me back out into the audience where I will spend the rest of my VFW career on the floor of the Convention with my comrades, back where I started. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, if you will bear with me just a moment, I received a FedEx letter in the hotel yesterday from the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright. I would like to take just a moment to read it.

"Let me extend my enthusiastic greetings to the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as you gather in Salt Lake City for your 1997 Annual Convention. As veterans of the United States Armed Forces, you have shown great patriotism through your military service to the country and in your support of those who continue to serve around the world today.

"You recognize that nothing is more fundamental to America's national security than the quality and readiness of America's men and women in uniform. As Secretary of State, I also know that our ability to exert political influence and act as a constructive force for peace abroad depends in part on the strength of our defenses and at times on the critical threat of force to back up our diplomacy.

"I commend the members of the VFW for the legacy of strength and leadership you have contributed to our nation for close to a century. Your support for normalization relations with Vietnam, for the chemical weapons convention and for our troops overseas, to efforts such as your Calling Card program, benefit not only your members but all Americans. You meet this year at a remarkable time in our nation's efforts abroad.

"With the end of the Cold War, we face both new dangers and also tremendous opportunities to improve America's security by reinforcing

recent progress abroad toward democracy, stability and security. It is my understanding that your Convention will consider a resolution on the addition of new members to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The enlargement of NATO can help to strengthen history's most successful military alliance and help prevent a war that claimed so many lives in this century.

"It will bolster democratic stability and prosperity in Central Europe and erase the outdated Cold War dividing line that Stalin imposed on Europe a half century ago. The VFW support for this historic event would be an important contribution toward the success for the enlargement and a new era of peace in Europe. I salute your singular dedication to protecting America's national security, and I extend my best wishes for an enjoyable Convention and every future success. /s/ Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State."

I will point out that we adopted the resolution to expand NATO, so I am sure she will be very pleased. Is there any other business to come before this Convention? Is there any other business to come before this Convention?

If not I will call on the Adjutant General at this time who will read the nominations for the National Home Trustees.

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief Nier, the nominations for the VFW National Home Trustees are as follows:

Third National Home District, comprised of Pennsylvania, District of Columbia and Delaware, Benjamin Pernol, Jr., Post No. 3792, Middletown, Delaware.

For Fourth National Home District, comprised of Ohio, West Virginia and Maryland, Lawrence Krugman, Post 1079, Elyria, Ohio, and Calla D. Frederick, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post No. 3081, Grafton, West Virginia.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Larry. At this time we will proceed with the election of officers. Nominations are now open for the position of Commander-in-Chief. Yesterday, the name of John E. Moon, from the great state of Ohio, was placed in nomination. Are there any other nominations for the position of Commander-in-Chief? Once, twice and three times. The nominations are closed.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE COX (Post 6772 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, George Cox, Department of Ohio, Senior Vice Commander from Post 6772, Ohio. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that the nominations be closed for the high office of Commander-in-Chief

and our Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for John E. Moon for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BILL HAWK (Post 9381 - Ohio): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. You have heard the motion. It has been duly seconded. Is there any discussion? There isn't any discussion, I hope. Those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief Nier, it is with a great deal of pleasure I cast one unanimous ballot for John E. Moon for the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MOON: Thank you very much. You know, one of the first thrills an individual experiences after the election of this high office of Commander-in-Chief is that traditional march in the convention hall. At the time that James Nier was elected Commander-in-Chief in Louisville, Kentucky, he was hospitalized and unable to lead the traditional march that we always have.

At this time I would ask the great state of Texas and the Southern Conference to join in the center aisle with Commander-in-Chief James Nier and his wife, Kimmy, and that the VFW Band strike up "As the Caissons Go Rolling Along" in honor of our Commander-in-Chief Jim and Kimmy. Please do that at this time.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Nominations are now open for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Yesterday the name of Thomas A. Pouliot, from the great state of Montana, was placed in nomination for the position of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Once, twice, three times. Hearing none, the nominations are closed.

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN (Post 1116 - Montana): Commander-in-Chief Nier, I move that the Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States cast one unanimous ballot for Thomas Pouliot for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. I need a second to the motion.

COMRADE WILLIAM SAUNDERS (Department of Wyoming): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion and the second. It has been duly seconded. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, the motion passes.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, I am hon-

ored to cast one unanimous ballot for Thomas Pouliot for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Nominations are now open for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Yesterday, the name of John W. Smart, from the great state of New Hampshire, was placed in nomination. Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Once, twice, three times. The nominations are closed.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD OLSON (Post 8699 - Massachusetts): There being no further nominations, I move that the Adjutant General cast one favorable and unanimous ballot for John W. Smart from New Hampshire for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for 1997-1998.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE VIRGIL MULLINS (Department of New Hampshire): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion as been duly made and seconded. Is there any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed by the same sign. The motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, I am honored to cast one unanimous vote for John Smart for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Nominations are open for the position of Quartermaster General. Yesterday the name of Joe L. Ridgley, from the great state of Missouri, was placed in nomination. Are there any other nominations for the position of Quartermaster General? Once, twice, three times. Hearing none, the nominations are closed.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE CHARLES THROWER (Post 3838 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Charles Thrower, VFW Post 3838, Cape Girardeau, Missouri. I move nominations for the office of Quartermaster General be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Joe L. Ridgley for the high office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TONY BORGAS (Post 2866 - Missouri): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. You have heard the motion duly made and seconded. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, all those in favor will say "aye". The motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, I am proud to cast one unanimous ballot for Joe L. Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Nominations are now open for Judge Advocate General.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): I move that nominations be closed and our Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot electing Brian J. Kennedy as Judge Advocate General.

COMRADE DONALD O'CONNOR (Post 9066 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Donald O'Connor, Post 9066, Franklin, Connecticut. It takes two sailors to get this Marine on the road. I second the nomination.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: You have heard the motion that has been duly seconded. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, the motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, I am honored to cast one unanimous ballot for Brian Kennedy for the office of Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Nominations are now open for Surgeon General. Yesterday afternoon the name of Henry F. Sexauer was placed in nomination. Are there any other nominations for the position of Surgeon General? Once, twice, three times. Hearing none, nominations are closed.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE FRANK HARRIS (Post 5231 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Frank Harris, Department of Colorado, Post 5231. It is with pride that I move the nominations be closed and that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for our candidate, Henry Sexauer, for National Surgeon General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LARRY MITCHELL (Post 8121 - Colorado): I second the nomination.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. You have heard the motion that has been duly seconded. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, the motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, I am honored to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Henry F. Sexauer for the office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Nominations are now open for the position of National Chaplain. I called to the podium for the purpose of making a nomination, Eugene H. George, Past State Commander, Post 9969, Del City, Oklahoma.

COMRADE EUGENE GEORGE (Post 9969 - Oklahoma): Comrades, Sunday morning we nominated and elected in the Southern Conference as the Chaplain for the incoming year. We went to the caucuses and made the introductions, and I see no sense in rehashing, carry-

ing on another 25 or 30 minutes, so at this time, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I hereby place the name in nomination for National Chaplain Dean Derieg from the State of Oklahoma.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: For the purpose of a second, I recognize Robert B. Thomas, Past State Commander, Post 1098, McAlester, Oklahoma.

COMRADE ROBERT THOMAS (Post 1098 - Oklahoma): Commander-in-Chief and Comrades of the greatest veterans organization in the world, it is an honor and privilege to second the nomination for Dean Derieg. I have been fortunate to know Dean for well over ten years. I have been in Committee meetings with him.

I have been in meetings where he was Commander, where he was a member. He is always a gentleman and he is always a VFW member. At this time I want to second the nomination for Dean Derieg for National Chaplain for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Are there any other nominations for the position of National Chaplain? Once, twice, three times. The nominations are closed.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE CHARLES HUCKABY (Department of Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move the nominations cease and that the National Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Reverend Dean Derieg for National Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE HARLAN BJORGO (Department of Oklahoma): Commander-in-Chief, I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. You have heard the motion. It has been duly seconded. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, the motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, I am honored to cast one unanimous ballot for Dean Derieg for National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: At this time I will ask the Assistant Adjutant General to come forward, please, for the announcement of the National Council Members-Elect.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Sergeant-at-Arms, will you, please, escort the Commander-in-Chief-Elect to the floor of the Convention for the presentation of caps to the National Council Members-Elect. The National Council Members-Elect are as follows:

District No. 1, Robert W. Madigan.

District No. 3, Raymond J. Boyle.

District No. 5, James R. Mueller.

District No. 7, Leroy Ford.

District No. 9, William J. Hendren.
District No. 11, William P. Shannon.
District No. 13, Lewie B. Cooper.
District No. 15, George H. Palmateer.
District No. 17, Frank Risewick.
District No. 19, Richard J. Fruge.
District A, Charles R. Feltenberger.
District B, Rick Frank.
District C, T. William Bossidy.
District F, Richard L. Lehner.
District G, Richard R. Pignone.
District J, James DePass.

Let me announce the names of the returning members of the National Council of Administration. As your name is called, please stand and be recognized.

District No. 2, William J. Madera.
District No. 4, Bruce A. Withers.
District No. 6, Scottie E. King.
District No. 8, Oliver Wayne Dial.
District 10, Leslie F. Thone.
District 12, William F. Cerny.
District 14, Earl E. Chase.
District No. 16, Dannie Cooper.
District D, George W. Marks.
District E, Gordon W. Kirk.
District No. H, Ferrell E. Warden.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: At this time I would like to call Commander-in-Chief-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars John E. Moon to the podium for the announcement of his appointments for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MOON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

First, I would like to announce the appointment of Larry W. Rivers, VFW Post 1736, Department of Louisiana, as the Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I am deeply honored to do so. (Applause)

I have asked James J. Thiel, VFW Post 717, Department of Indiana, to serve as my National Chief of Staff. I would also like to ask his wife to please step forward and present him with his official cap.

For Inspector General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 1997-'98, I will appoint Daniel Bartholomew, VFW Post 3144, Department of Minnesota. And I would like you to come forward and present Dan with his official cap.

Following the conclusion of this Convention, the National Sergeant-at-Arms for 1997-1998 will be Barry Hoffman from VFW Post 6240, Department of Kansas.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, sisters, ladies and gentlemen, the next item on the agenda is remarks by the Commander-in-Chief. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to John Moon for allowing Kimmy and I to march around this great hall this morning, the opportunity that I didn't have a year ago. John, I am forever, ever grateful for that.

I want to thank my Post, my District, my Department and the Southern Conference and the members of the Ladies Auxiliary for their support during my campaign, and certainly for the support during these last three years. My comments will be very brief because this is John Moon's day.

There are some other folks I need to thank. I want to thank the Kansas City staff, I want to thank the Washington office staff for their continued support. No one ascends to this position and succeeds without being surrounded by good people.

I have indeed been surrounded by some of the finest people, some of the finest staff members that we could possibly have in these two offices. I commend both of those offices, Larry and Ken Steadman, and all their staff for the outstanding job they have always done.

I want to thank my wife, Kimmy, for always being with me and beside me when she was able to be. She has been an inspiration to me. It takes a very understanding wife in this great position, and I certainly have had one. Kimmy, I want to publicly express my thanks and love to you. Thank you. (Applause)

I want to thank all of you for what you do for your Posts, your Districts, your Departments, your Auxiliaries. I want to thank you for what you do for America's veterans. I want to thank you for what you do for America. But most importantly, to me I want to thank you for being our friends.

I cherish friendship. I love meeting new people, making new friends. We have done that around the country and, in fact, around the world this past year. I have fond memories. It has been a wonderful, wonderful rewarding experience, one that I shall never, ever forget.

I am looking forward to serving on the Council of Administration, and I pledge to John Moon my total support for whatever he decides to do in his year. That is the way it has to be. I am looking forward, as I said, to traveling. John has already given me some assignments, and I am looking forward to that very much.

I am not saying goodbye, my fellow comrades, I am saying until we have the opportunity to be together again. I thank you, and may God bless you and may God continue to bless this great nation in which we live.

Thank you all very, very much.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I was just told I am officially a short-timer, but that is okay. I am not at all sad, folks. I am looking forward to spending some time with my wife and enjoying my own home for a while.

At this point, we will proceed with the Installation of Officers. I would ask my Inspector General, who is acting as the National Chief of Staff, to please escort the Installing Officer to a position to my right.

I present to you the Installing Officer, Past Commander-in-Chief Walter G. Hogan.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: Having been duly authorized, I will now proceed with the Installation of the National Officers.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the term for which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed has now expired. It is my duty to ascertain the following. Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: They have, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: Have the books of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: They have, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: He does, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time, the by-laws prescribe you must within 60 days of election or appointment submit to the Adjutant General for his file a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: They are, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: And ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: They are, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: Do you have the charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: I do, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: You will now surrender the gavel to me. Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier, you have now been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It is proper to remind you that in assuming the chair of Past Commander-in-

Chief it will be your duty and privilege to counsel and otherwise assist your successor through the experiences that you have gained during your term of office. You will now station yourself at my right.

Sergeant-at-Arms, as the Adjutant General reads the list of officers, you will present the officers-elect at the altar.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: They are as follows:
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Thomas E. Pouliot.
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, John W. Smart.
Quartermaster General, Joe L. Ridgley.
Judge Advocate General, Brian J. Kennedy.
Surgeon General, Henry F. Sexauer.
National Chaplain, Dean Derieg.
National Chief of Staff, James Thiel.
Inspector General, Daniel Bartholomew.
District Council Members:

District No. 1	-	Robert W. Madigan
District No. 2	-	William J. Madera
District No. 3	-	Raymond J. Boyle
District No. 4	-	Bruce A. Withers
District No. 5	-	James R. Mueller
District No. 6	-	Scottie E. King
District No. 7	-	Leroy Ford
District No. 8	-	Oliver Wayne Dial
District No. 9	-	William J. Hendren
District No. 10	-	Leslie F. Thone
District No. 11	-	William P. Shannon
District No. 12	-	William F. Cerny, Jr.
District No. 13	-	Lewie B. Cooper
District No. 14	-	Earl E. Chase
District No. 15	-	George H. Palmateer
District No. 16	-	Dannie Cooper
District No. 17	-	Frank Risewick
District No. 19	-	Richard J. Fruge
District A	-	Charles R. Feltenberger
District B	-	Rick Frank
District C	-	T. William Bossidy
District D	-	George W. Marks
District E	-	Gordon W. Kirk
District F	-	Richard L. Lehner
District G	-	Richard R. Pignone
District H	-	Ferrell E. Warden
District J	-	James DePass
Past Commander-in-Chief	-	James E. Nier
Adjutant General	-	Larry W. Rivers
Commander-in-Chief	-	John E. Moon

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: National Officers-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will administer to you the Officers' Obligation.

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand and repeat after me. Will everybody please rise.

(Whereupon, the following Officers' Obligation was given at this time: "I do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed, according to the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, all records, monies, or other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise, upon my honor, as a loyal citizen of our great Republic. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: As you were.

Comrade Chaplain.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN BLEILER: Almighty God, our God and divine protector, give Thy blessings upon these, our comrades, who now become fellow officers. We beseech you, O Lord, who are ever present amongst us. Grant the wisdom unto them so that during their deliberations they continue to favor Thee, our glorious country and the veterans organization.

May Thy strength sustain them, may Thy power preserve them, may Thy hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, will you, please, escort the officers to their stations.

National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy the position of honor to which your comrades have elected you. You learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake.

The Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your respective offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you for your election or appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties.

National Council of Administration members, you will stand and face the dais. National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the Commander-in-Chief to my station. Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect John E. Moon, before administering your obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties.

You will be personally responsible for the charter of this organization. At the end of your term of office, you will deliver it to the officer appointed to install your successor. It is your duty to see that all National Officers perform their duties to the best of their ability.

You shall keep yourself informed on all proposed legislation which may affect the welfare of potential and actual comrades of this organization, and strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all of your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important questions referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all of your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect John E. Moon, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MOON: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, give your name as I give mine, and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Moon received the following obligation: "In the presence of Almighty God and the officers and delegates of this order here assembled, I, John E. Moon, do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge, to the best of my ability, the duties of the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to which I have been elected in accordance with the Ritual and By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, the National Charter, all records, monies and other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control."

"I do further solemnly promise that I will be fair and impartial in my actions towards all comrades, and I will always strive to promote the best interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER HOGAN: As you were. Officers, you will assume your station. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I now place in your possession our Charter and I present you with this gavel, which is the emblem of your authority. Use it firmly, but with discretion.

All National Officers, you will stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me: "Comrade Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon, to you I pledge my sincere allegiance." As you were.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, officers and delegates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I now proclaim the National Officers duly installed and this organization in working order for the ensuing year.

Commander-in-Chief John Moon, I personally would like to thank you for the high honor of installing you as the Commander-in-Chief and I pledge to you my continued support in your year as Commander-in-Chief. God bless you and save journeys in your travels.

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
TO CURTIS M. JEWELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much, Past Commander-in-Chief Wally Hogan. It is indeed a pleasure for me this morning to be standing here and to call to the podium a comrade who for many, many years has served our organization. If I could have the Sergeant-at-Arms to go to the center of the aisle and please escort Curt Jewell to the podium.

Curtis Jewell joined the VFW in 1947, soon after returning from World War II, where he served as a crew member in the Air Transport Command in the China-Burma-India theater of operations, the guys who flew the "hump" carrying cargo into China.

From his first position of the VFW, that of Post Commander, Curt showed an outstanding leadership ability. In just two and a half years, he took that Post's membership from 369 members to 1,036. Now, that takes leadership. That work won him an appointment as the Department of Ohio Chief of Staff.

In 1955, he was elected Department Commander, the youngest person to ever hold that position in Ohio. Following that, he served for many years as the Department's Adjutant/Quartermaster, and in 1965 he joined the staff at VFW National Headquarters as the Assistant Adjutant General for Programs. In 1988, he was appointed Assistant Adjutant General for Administration. He retired from National in 1991.

There were other appointments and positions, as well, and in all of them, Curt Jewell showed "Courage Under Fire" in serving his fellow veterans.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to present him with the VFW Distinguished Service Medal. Please welcome Comrade Curt Jewell, Post 1090, Warren, Ohio.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: "Veterans of Foreign Wars Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Curtis M. Jewell.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over five decades of distinguished and loyal service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a dedicated employee, extraordinary professional and gifted administrator fulfilling the positions of Department of Ohio Commander, Department of Ohio Adjutant/Quartermaster, Chairman of the Big Ten Conference, National Director of Public Relations, National Director of Community

Activities, National Director of Program Activities and culminating in his elevation to the position of Assistant Adjutant General, a position he held for 24 years, the duties and responsibilities of which he performed faithfully with unparalleled expertise and integrity in support of the highest ideals and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 21st day of August, 1997." That has been signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Curt, I am deeply honored to be able to present to you this distinguished award. (Applause)

RESPONSE - COMRADE CURTIS M. JEWELL

COMRADE JEWELL: Commander-in-Chief John Moon, to all the Past Commanders-in-Chief of which I had the privilege of working for some 25 or 29 of them, all great men who served and contributed to this great organization.

You know, I thought this morning that something was amiss. I want to tell you, John, one more lap around this hall, if this event had not taken place in the 20th century, I might not have been here to witness it myself. Three laps around this hall was just about all I could handle.

Fifty years ago I joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in 1947. I have had the privilege since that time to serve the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as John has alluded to, and my fellow veterans. I have attempted to do it in all honesty, sincerity and integrity that I could muster.

I can honestly say that in the more than 40 years that I served at the Post, at the Department and as an employee at National Headquarters, I never once looked back with regret or remorse for the association, the acquaintances that I have made. The friendships that were developed over these years have and will last a lifetime.

It was an exhilarating experience to work for the great men who led this organization throughout the twenty odd years that I served those Commanders-in-Chief and worked with the comrades, my comrades at the national, state and local levels.

I take great pride that in some of the programs which were developed during the course of those years, as an example, the good comrades down in Ohio, a program of 40 years standing, the selection of an outstanding high school athlete is still carried on thanks to Rich Howell and the Associated Press.

There are others like organizing new Posts, seminars, the starting up of bringing in the Department Senior Vice Commanders three to four months before they assumed office as a Department Commander. It was my feeling, and fortunately it was one of Julian's good days when you could talk to him, I convinced him that it was much better to bring the men in and

give them a running start on the great responsibility that they were going to assume once they became Department Commander, because they didn't have time to think about it then.

And they are continuing those types of programs because we are living in a rapid society where you have to get up in the morning and start running or you are going to be left behind. I had the privilege of working through toward goals. I think there was a little over a million members when I joined the National Headquarters staff in 1962.

Then came that glorious year when we passed the two million mark and we are still there and still going. The pride, the development, the achievements, some of which I have spoken of, are all in the past. All we have to look forward to is the future. The time is running out on a lot of them. It can be done.

A fair example of that, and pardon me if I refer to the Commander of Ohio last year, seven times an All-American Commander; never once would he quit or say that something couldn't be done. I called him the morning after he had been announced and advised that he was an All-American to congratulate him, and his wife told me that he had already gone to work.

Probably the truth of the matter is he was probably out working for the VFW. But, in any event, I don't want to get too carried away. It is difficult enough to even be here. I want to thank those, especially John Moon, who is most responsible for the recognition and honor that has been bestowed upon me here today.

I say to you and I say it quickly. It is not a singular honor, and I accept it in behalf of all of you out there and all of the hundreds and thousands who preceded you that I have had the privilege of working with to make this organization the success that it has been these past 40 years that I have been associated with it.

I appreciate the friends, service and cooperation, the hospitality that was extended wherever I went. I miss most the absence of those near and dear associates and friends who are not here today which I number without naming any for fear I would leave some one deserving individual recognition out. They are missed, but their contribution remains as it always will.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not take a personal privilege and mention the name of one man who made it all possible, when 35 years ago I received a telephone call, and I was out in the field, not farming, not working, I was trying to conduct and make my livelihood as a salesman.

I wasn't doing a very good job at that. They said, "You have a call from Kansas City." So I went to the phone and I called them. That one man that made it all possible was Julian Dickinson. He offered me a job. I tried to get more money. He said, "Take it or leave it. I can't do it. I will see you here Monday."

I said, "Julian, it isn't possible. I owe something to my present employer." I said, "I will be there in two weeks." So on March 15, 1962, I

entered through the portals of the National Headquarters where I served, and I am still appreciative of that as ever.

But without a calculator, my service ended March 15, 1991, 29 years later. The only regret I have standing here, and it is with mixed emotion, because my wife could not be here. She didn't know and I didn't know, or I might not have been here myself.

But she should be standing here beside me because of the sacrifices she made, and my son who grew up with his dad's activities running here and running there for the VFW. I have tried in so many ways to make it up to him. I wish both could be here to share this moment and this memory with me.

I don't know whose water I am drinking, but I am going to help myself because I just have one more thing to say. I only hope and pray that this momentous occasion will not be lost or misplaced so that I will be able to share this with them and my grandchildren when I return home.

Above all, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your friendship and above all your loyalty to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and to myself as a person, I will never, never forget you and this occasion. Thank you all.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: If I could at this time have Past Commander-in-Chief James Nier come to the podium. Will Kimmy Nier please come to the podium also. Past Commander-in-Chief James Nier, I would like for this organization to pay its greatest respect to you, and I ask your wife to pin your Past Commander-in-Chief's pin on you at this time.

Jim, also come forward again. It is with the deepest amount of honor and respect that I present to you your Gold Life Membership Card.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States certifies that James E. Nier is a Life Member of VFW Post 2819." Jim, congratulations.

IMMEDIATE PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thanks, John.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: And a little token, Jim. You are going to be on the team this year so I will have to give you this.

If I could have the wives to please come forward and we can start the placement of the hats and the pins, then we will get into, unfortunately, my acceptance speech, which you guys know how long I talk. I have already forgotten my wife, Susie.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Moon called on the wives at this time to place the caps on the newly-elected officers.)

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you so much for the

rousing reception given to me and my fellow VFW National Officers.

To Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart and all National and Department Officers, to all Past Commanders-in-Chief, and especially to you, my fellow VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members and friends, I say thank you for your support and your confidence you have placed in me.

I humbly accept this high office and your trust in me. I pledge my total commitment to you and this great organization of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I am so grateful to many people. As I stand before you, I am mindful that no person can be elected to this high office without the support, confidence, guidance and trust of the many hard-working men and women who are leaders of the Post, District, Department and Conference from which they come.

I am very thankful for Paul Spera giving me the opportunity to serve as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Thank you, Paul. To an individual to my right, who I have learned so much from, who has been more than just a great friend, but just like a brother to me, Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier, who I owe a great deal of love, respect and honor. Jim, thank you very much.

To all the Departments that make up the Big Ten Conference, thank you for the opportunity which you have given me. I am indebted to each and every one of you and I intend to pay you back by working to make sure that this organization continues to grow and prosper on behalf of all of our veterans.

To my own Post, although it may be small, VFW Post 2873 and our great Ladies Auxiliary, I will always remember the confidence and support they have shown me through the years. To my District No. 1, and as I look out here to the great State of Ohio, each and every one of you have done so much to put me in this position, I will be eternally grateful.

Another individual from the great State of Ohio who can't be here, who just underwent heart surgery and still is recuperating, who spent so many tireless hours and so many days away from his job to help me reach this high office, John Wasylik, Past Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A special thanks comes here because no one will ever be able to know the amount of support she has given me. That is to my wife Susie who has always been there fighting, fighting, fighting and fighting to see to it that I got into this position as Commander-in-Chief. To you, Susie, I love you very much.

I have to get a little break here to get my composure back. If I could introduce real quickly, I brought most of Grover Hill with me. Not quite all the family, my son couldn't be here. He is on jury duty in Florida, and my daughter just started back to school in Western Carolina University, so they will be joining me at the homecoming.

Valerie and her friend Kevin, granddaughter Samantha and grand-

son, as I affectionately call him, "Dutch." To my son Dave, daughter-in-law Dawn, my mother-in-law and very, very dear friend, Ronnie. Then there is the lady we call Aunt Faye, and my brother's fiancée, Sue; my niece, Michelle, and her friend Gabe Yoder, my nephew, Gary. Will you all give them a hand, please. (Applause)

I am holding my brother up for a minute. I have some friends back here, great friends. Norm and Bonnie Landers from the great state of Kentucky. There is one individual I introduced to you and his wife are relatives of the family, our cousins, but he said to someone when he came out here, "How did you get here from Grover Hill?" "I am only the yard man." These are good friends of the family, the John Wilkins from Grover Hill.

He may be my Post Quartermaster, he may be my State Commander, but above all he is my greatest friend, Roger Taylor, and his wife Chris. I have introduced one hero to you already, and that is my wife. She has really been there. Another hero is, my brother, Larry, that joined the VFW after much insistence, but he spent three years in Vietnam, and the three years he spent there he tried to keep me out of Vietnam, so he is a hero to me that he will never know how much I really think of him and how much I love him. (Applause)

My remarks this morning will not set out John Moon's agenda for the 1997-'98 VFW year. There is no Moon agenda, only a VFW agenda, which has been set, not by me but by you, the membership. Having approved and passed a wide range of Resolutions, our members have now spoken.

With our agenda set and our concerns expressed, I pledge as your Commander-in-Chief the total commitment of the Moon-Pouliot-Smart-Ridgley-Rivers-Kennedy-Sexauer-Derieg team, an assembly of Veterans of Foreign Wars officers that you have chosen to be placed in this position, along with the Department Commanders, our "Courage Under Fire" Commanders, we do, in fact, pledge that we will work hard to carry out your mandates.

We will work hard to make the VFW a positive force for this country and her veterans and we will work hard to ensure that the faith, trust and confidence that you have placed in the Moon-Pouliot-Smart team will pay dividends, not only for the VFW but for our nation, our communities and America's veterans.

Our success or failure depends not so much on what I say here this morning but what we, all of us working together in partnership, do in the coming year.

As we begin a new year, let me begin by reaffirming the partnership between the VFW and our great Ladies Auxiliary. To National President Connie Atkinson and her staff, I pledge full cooperation and support. The VFW is a stronger, better organization because of the Ladies Auxiliary. Your support and hard work have truly enriched the work and reputation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

During the coming year the Moon-Pouliot-Smart team will speak

with courage and conviction for the VFW on a wide range of important issues. It is a different world today than it was five years ago or even three years ago. We are in a period of great change, a period of transition, not only nationally and globally, but also within the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I look to my right again and I commend an individual who took a chance and took a shot to ensure that change could begin. Jim Nier, I thank you for getting us on this great change that we have for the future.

Our VFW membership, while not on a steep decline, gradually changes each year. The challenge before us is to reach those millions of eligible veterans who know and support the VFW but have not had the opportunity to opt for membership in our great organization.

The challenge before us is to make the VFW a force for change, a force for action. That means we must work hard to project the image of the VFW as a positive force, not only for veterans but for our communities and for our nation.

And what better way to project that positive VFW image than through our continued co-sponsorship with the VA and the National Veterans Golden Age Games next May at Leesburg, Virginia.

These games, which are designed to improve the quality of life of our older veterans, provide the opportunity to help our fellow veterans in our communities and at the same time improve our image.

While the challenges we face today are taking place in a positive environment, we are at peace, we are economically prosperous, we cannot be complacent. We must change indifference into concern. We must change challenges into opportunities. We must change individualism into unity.

Important decisions are being made daily affecting veterans. With thousands of homeless veterans walking the streets, with an aging veteran population and the need for long-time care ever increasing, with the ever elusive cause and cure for the disabilities confronting some of our Persian Gulf veterans, with health-care costs remaining high and Congress looking for ways to save money, it is clear that we have our work cut out for us.

And speaking of saving some money, let me take a few moments to tell you of a Korean War veteran, a veteran who for over 30 years after that war worked as a farmer in his home state. He worked very hard, made a fair living, and asked for very little, only some VA care and compensation for his wounds suffered years ago during the Korean War.

But one particular day, when he asked a VA employee familiar with his case for further assistance, the VA employee turned him down, citing unusual and extraordinary costs associated with his case. You see, this man, who for 30 plus years, farmed for a living, had lost both arms, one eye and part of his foot in Korea and the cost for his prosthetics was \$14,000.

He is a wonderful person, he is a vibrant man, he is a great individual, a dear friend of mine. He is my third hero. His love for people, whose love for life is expressed by the distinct clacking and beat of his prosthetic arms coming together in appreciation and excitement for friends,

family and life. What his VA case employee wanted, was a less active man. What this VA employee was asking was for him to give up a piece of his life.

But thanks to veterans organizations like the VFW, the situation was quickly assessed, the employee transferred and our Korean veteran did get his new arms.

Our work is definitely cut out for us. It only takes one isolated incident such as I just mentioned to destroy a system designed to care for our veterans.

This morning the biggest challenge before the VFW, you and me as veterans advocates, is to ensure not only the survivability of the VA system, but that it be the best provider of health care to you, the veterans of America, and the former defenders of our country.

Today, the VA medical system is transforming itself from a hospital-based provider of inpatient services to an outpatient oriented practitioner of modern health care. What this means is higher quality care. It also means providing more timely care to a greater number of veterans at conveniently accessible locations. It is not going to be an easy job.

Our critics point to a declining veteran population as reason not to spend more money on veterans' programs. With a rapidly aging veteran population that is unequally spread throughout the nation, the VA is attempting to redistribute its resources among its various medical Service Networks and place them where they will do the most good.

Be assured that the VFW will carefully monitor the process. We will not tolerate any inequities nor will we tolerate any veterans suffering unduly as a consequence of this sharing concept. We will and shall alert Congress and the administration that the VFW will be constantly on guard to ensure that no veteran currently receiving VA health care be denied care as a result of this alignment.

As the VA transforms itself to the more modern health care concepts and practices for the 21st Century, we must have the courage to face those who would thwart this needed change. Let there be no doubt that in the coming months, we will all be called to exercise "Courage Under Fire" as we take a leading role in ensuring that VA provides access to quality health care to all veterans who need or want it.

To honor that commitment, I am pleased to announce today that the VFW Washington Office will open a new toll-free hotline on September 1, 1997, 1-800-VFW-1899.

We will also distribute VFW posters as shown on the screen to all our departments and to the VA medical facilities advertising our VFW hotline and encouraging veterans to tell us, with complaints and compliments, how they are being treated and how the medical care is at that particular facility.

This information will be fed to the National Veterans Service staff in our VFW Tactical Assessments Center located in the Washington Office. Our staff will take necessary corrective action with appropriate VA personnel and use your comments, suggestions and ideas to compile and develop

a better picture of how well VA is doing in providing quality, timely health care to veterans.

Rest assured that we will challenge those who would undermine the quality as well as the accessibility of veterans health care. Be equally assured that we will not be overwhelmed by the number and complexity of the issues that confront us. We welcome the challenge with “Courage Under Fire” and will proceed with the courage and conviction that we will do what is best for our nation’s veterans. We are committed to the premise that the American people want fair and equitable treatment for the service and sacrifice made by our nation’s veterans.

When we were formed 98 years ago, we were formed for one purpose, to protect the rights and entitlements of every veteran who has honorably served. As overseas wartime veterans, we know what it means to take care of one another, and we know the importance of maintaining a strong national defense.

History tells us, and the VFW has always backed a strong national defense as being in our national interest. Let me reaffirm my commitment to that premise. If we are to remain a great nation, if we are to remain a free people, then we must stand by our young men and women in uniform.

We continue to be alarmed by the downsizing of our military forces, the multitude of missions they are expected to undertake, to include chasing war criminals in Bosnia. The VFW has always supported a strong national defense. But peace keeping missions and the resettlement of refugees may be taking the edge off the combat readiness of our forces.

We are proud of the young men and women who are willing to fight and die for this great country. If we ask them to serve, to stand in harm’s way, we must ensure that they have the very latest and best resources to do the job. Their courage, their commitment to maintaining our nation’s freedom demands not only our respect and admiration but our support. We will pursue every opportunity to show our support and tell our military men and women the VFW story.

And what better way to show our military that support than providing them with VFW telephone calling cards through Operation Uplink, a program jointly supported by the VFW and our Ladies Auxiliary.

We must also be there for the men and women when they make that transition from the military to civilian life. America’s veterans deserve to be full-fledged participants in today’s strong economy, an economy which veterans help build and defend. Your VFW will work hard to protect and enhance employment and job opportunities because our young military men and women deserve to make the smoothest transition to civilian life.

There are many, many other important issues. We are encouraged by the presence in Vietnam of Ambassador Pete Peterson, a former Congressman and POW, and his support for Joint Task Force — Full Accounting and their ongoing work to account for our missing.

We are equally encouraged by the recent negotiations with North

Korea which is leading to increased joint search and recovery for our missing men in that reclusive country. However, we must insist that our own government move quickly, seize every opportunity, and maintain its commitment and the current effort. The answers to our missing can only come by working with our governments to do more.

We are always mindful of those families who have lost a loved one and seek closure and healing. We must not relent nor will we rest until we have the fullest possible accounting of the MIAs.

As economic stability and growth bolster our NATO allies in Europe and as Eastern Europe competes for membership in NATO, we believe that a carefully paced, non-threatening enlargement of the NATO alliance will enhance the peace and stability in Europe.

Throughout this century, our nation fought in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf and many other conflicts and crises. Today, I proudly stand before an audience of those veterans who served and who through their "Courage Under Fire" made great sacrifices to keep our nation free. You stood by our nation in perilous times and today we will stand by you, America's veterans, to provide a better world.

This has been a tremendous Convention. Important decisions have been made. If I were to sum up our work at this Convention, I would say our delegates have instructed us, in no uncertain terms, to work hard to ensure our nation's security and to see that veterans are treated fairly. It is now up to each of us to carry out the mandates of our membership.

Today, we begin a new year, a new journey. As we prepare to honor the VFW's centennial anniversary, as we prepare to begin a new millennium, we are beginning a trip into America's future, and the future of the VFW. But we are not going as sight-seers, we are going as builders.

We are going to have a hand in shaping the world we live in. We are not going to accept what is given; we are going to build what we need. Working together, we will turn indifference into concern, and concern into action. Working together, we will strengthen our VFW programs to build an America that holds promise for young and old alike.

I pledge to you my best efforts and the best efforts of the Moon-Pouliot-Smart team during our 1997-'98 VFW year. If we are to succeed, we must travel this difficult road together. But with your help and with "Courage Under Fire" we will succeed.

Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMRADE LAWRENCE LeFEBVRE (Post 552 - Michigan): There being no further business to come before this Convention, and the officers having been duly elected and installed, I move that the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed sine die.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We have a motion on the floor. Do we have a second?

COMRADE GEORGE LANGE (Post 284 - District of Columbia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been properly made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none, we will call for a vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". The motion carries.

The Council meeting will be starting at high noon today. That will be in the Ballroom at the Salt Palace Convention Center.

At this time, Comrade Chaplain, come forward, please. Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the retirement of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Honor Guard retired the Colors at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: National Chaplain, we will have your closing prayer.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Derieg gave the Closing Prayer from the Ritual.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and sisters, this now concludes the 98th National Convention.

(Whereupon, the Convention was duly adjourned at 11:45 o'clock a.m., sine die.)

AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS AND MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

B-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 202 - By-Laws.

Amend Section 202, National By-Laws, by deleting in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Posts may, by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting called for such purpose adopt By-Laws governing the Post provided each member has been notified and provided a copy of the proposed By-Laws at least seven (7) days in advance by first class mail and such By-Laws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws of the Department having jurisdiction. By-Laws approved by a Post shall be forwarded as provided in the Manual of Procedure prior to becoming effective. Unless otherwise provided for in the Post By-Laws, Post By-Laws may be amended by a Post by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a stated meeting thereof provided, however, such amendments have been read at the preceding stated meeting and each member notified at least seven (7) days in advance by first class mail of the contents of the amendments and date on which proposed amendments are to be presented for adoption.” (Approved)

B-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 413 -ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Amend Section 413, National By-Laws, by adding the following to the last sentence:

“, except as provided for in Section 514 of these By-Laws.” (Approved)

B-3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 521- COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION — COMPOSITION, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 521(c), National By-Laws, by deleting the last sentence in the first paragraph. (Approved)

B-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS

Amend Article V, National By-Laws, by adding the following after Section 521:

“SECTION 522 - CONFERENCES (DIVISIONAL SOCIETIES).

(a) Formation, Chartering.

(1) For the purposes set forth in this Section only, Departments shall be organized into Conferences. There shall be four (4) Conferences: Eastern, Southern, Western and Big Ten.

a. The Eastern Conference shall consist of the Departments of: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Europe, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.

b. The Southern Conference shall consist of the Departments of: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

c. The Western Conference shall consist of the Departments of: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Pacific Areas, Latin America/Caribbean, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

d. The Big Ten Conference shall consist of the Departments of: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Upon the request of a newly chartered Department or a Provisional Department, and with the concurrence of the affected Conference, the National Council of Administration is authorized to assign a newly chartered Department or a Provisional Department to a Conference. The National Council of Administration may also authorize a transfer of a Department from one Conference to another Conference, provided that the Department and each of the affected Conferences give their written concurrence. Otherwise, a Department may only be organized into a different Conference by amendment to these By-Laws.

(2) Purposes of Conferences. Conferences are organized to permit the Departments organized therein to coordinate their respective efforts in attaining the objectives of this Organization, confer regarding matters of mutual interest and concern and select candidates for national offices. Commencing with election year 2000 each Conference, on a rotating basis (West - East - South - Big 10), shall provide a candidate or candi-

dates for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Election of the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall be as prescribed in Section 609 of the Manual of Procedure. Conferences shall have no power or authority to direct or administer the affairs of the National Organization, Department, District, County Council or Post or otherwise recommend or establish rules and regulations governing them, except as specifically set forth in these By-Laws.

(3) **Charters.** Charters of Conferences shall be authorized by the National Council of Administration, signed by the Commander-in-Chief and countersigned by the Adjutant General. No Conference shall be recognized or function as such unless acting under an unforfeited charter.

(b) Governing Body; Composition.

Each Conference shall be governed by its Conference Meetings. A Conference Meeting shall consist of delegates appointed or elected by Departments. Conference By-Laws shall prescribe the manner in which the number of delegates shall be established. Each Department shall determine the manner in which its delegates shall be selected and the manner in which the Department shall exercise its voting strength.

(c) By-Laws.

Each Conference shall adopt By-Laws governing the Conference, provided such By-Laws may not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. By-Laws in place and any amendments approved by a Conference shall be forwarded as provided in the Manual of Procedure.

(d) Conference Meetings; Quorum; Caucuses.

(1) Each Conference shall have at least one meeting each year called an Annual Meeting. Conferences may hold additional Meetings or call Special Meetings as prescribed by Conference By-Laws. The times for Conference Meetings shall be prescribed by Conference By-Laws.

The minimum number of Departments to be represented and minimum number of delegates to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a Conference Meeting shall be prescribed in Conference By-Laws.

(2) Each Conference shall conduct at least one Caucus Meeting during the National Convention. Conference By-Laws shall prescribe the manner in which the number of delegates shall be established. Each Department shall determine the manner in which its delegates shall be selected and the manner in which the Department shall exercise its voting strength.

(e) Surrender or Forfeiture of Charter.

Voluntary Surrender. A Conference may voluntarily surrender its charter only upon a vote at a Conference Meeting after due notice of such proposition is given, in writing, to every Department organized into the Conference and to the Commander-in-Chief. If two-thirds (2/3) of the Departments vote to surrender the charter, the Conference Chairman shall,

within thirty (30) days, request that the Commander-in-Chief cancel the charter. For purposes of this section, voting shall be by unit rule and each Department shall have but one vote.

Disposition of Property. In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, all of the property of the Conference, including books of record and papers and money belonging to it, shall be immediately recovered by the Commander-in-Chief and turned over to the Quartermaster General in trust for disposition as directed by the National Council of Administration for the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter.

In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, the National Council of Administration in the case of trust funds or trust property, or both, shall carry out the intent and purposes of such trust to the extent of such funds or property, or both.

(f) Suspension and Revocation of Charter.

(1) Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Suspension. The Commander-in-Chief may suspend the charter of a Conference for a period of up to sixty (60) days for the same reasons and in the same manner as a Department Charter may be suspended pursuant to Section 509.

(2) Actions by the Commander-in-Chief—Revocation. The Commander-in-Chief may cancel or revoke the charter of a Conference for the same reasons as Department charters may be canceled or revoked pursuant to Section 509. Before the Commander-in-Chief may cancel or revoke the charter of a Conference, the Conference Chairman and the Commander of each Department in the Conference shall be notified in writing of the proposed cancellation or revocation and of the grounds therefor. Unless the Conference Chairman or at least five (5) Department Commanders of Departments in the Conference notify the Commander-in-Chief in writing within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of notice from the Commander-in-Chief that a hearing is desired, the cancellation or revocation of charter shall be effected. In the event that a hearing is requested, said hearing shall be held within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the notice that a hearing is desired, at a time and place and in a manner designated by the Commander-in-Chief, and shall be before the Commander-in-Chief. Representatives of the Conference shall be permitted to present evidence in its behalf. The Commander-in-Chief shall thereafter, and within thirty (30) days, decide the matter.

If the Conference is not already under a suspension at the time that the notice of proposed cancellation or revocation is given, the Conference shall thereafter be under suspension as provided above, and the Commander-in-Chief shall appoint trustees who shall act in the manner herein provided for a suspended Conference.

(3) Appeal to the National Council of Administration. In the event that the Commander-in-Chief should determine, after hearing, that the Conference charter should be revoked and canceled, the Conference or at least five (5) Department Commanders of Departments within the Conference, may appeal said revocation and cancellation to the

National Council of Administration. Such an appeal shall be in the manner prescribed for an appeal to the National Council of Administration under Section 109 of these By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure.

(4) Establishment of Trusteeship. Upon the imposition of any suspension of charter under this Section, the Commander-in-Chief shall establish a trusteeship consisting of from three to fifteen trustees. Said trusteeship shall be conducted in the manner prescribed for Departments in suspension pursuant to Section 509.

(5) In the event of cancellation or revocation of a Conference charter, disposition of its property and trust funds shall be as provided for surrender or forfeiture of charter in the manner prescribed for Departments under Section 508.

(g) Conference Dues.

Each Conference may assess dues pursuant to Conference By-Laws. Dues shall be assessed against Departments in the Conference and not against members in the respective Departments. Conferences may, by Conference By-Laws, establish penalties for nonpayment of Conference dues or other financial obligations, including loss of voting privileges.

(h) Solicitation: Fund-raising.

Conferences shall not be permitted to solicit funds or donations nor shall Conferences be permitted to engage in any fund-raising activity other than activities incident to the conduct of Conference Meetings.

(i) Eligibility to Office.

Any member in good standing in a Post in a Department within the Conference shall be eligible to any Conference office, provided that no member shall hold two elective Conference offices at the same time. Conference officers, elected or appointed, may concurrently hold offices other than Conference offices.

(j) Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

(1) The elective officers of each Conference shall be the Conference Chairman, one or more Vice Chairmen, and the Treasurer. Conference By-Laws may provide for the election or appointment of a Conference Secretary, Chaplain and Sergeant-at-Arms. There shall be no other elective or appointed Conference officers.

(2) In accordance with Conference By-Laws, the Conference may elect or the Conference Chairman may appoint such chairmen and committees as may be required or otherwise necessary to carry out the responsibilities and functions of the Conference.

(3) No officer, committee chairman or committee member shall be paid a salary or other compensation for his services, provided, however, the Conference may authorize the reimbursement of reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by such persons related to conducting Conference business.

(4) Conference officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the Secretary. Conference officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has

been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the Conference Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer prior to installation to office. In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within sixty (60) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited and the office declared vacant.

(k) Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Conference officers shall be nominated, elected or appointed, and installed in the manner prescribed in Conference By-Laws. The term of office of Conference officers shall be one (1) year.

An officer elected and installed shall continue to hold office for the period for which elected and until his successor is installed, unless the position is declared vacant pursuant to provisions in Conference By-Laws. Appointed officers and committee members shall hold office during the pleasure of the appointing officer. An officer or committee member must remain in good standing in a Post in a Department in the Conference.

(l) Officers, Duties and Obligations.

The Conference officers, elective and appointive, shall have such duties and obligations as prescribed in these By-Laws, the Ritual and Manual of Procedure and such other duties and obligations as may be prescribed in Conference By-Laws not inconsistent with these By-Laws.

(m) Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers.

The manner of removal of elective officers and filling of vacancies shall be prescribed in the Conference By-Laws.

(n) Voting.

Each Conference shall adopt Conference By-Laws setting forth the manner of voting at Conference Meetings and in conducting elections.

(o) Incorporation of Provisions Applicable to Departments.

Except as otherwise provided herein, for purposes of the following By-Laws, and corresponding provisions of the Manual of Procedure, the regulations applicable to Departments shall apply to Conferences in like manner:

Section 105
Section 702
Section 703
Section 707
Section 708
Section 709
Section 719
Section 720
Section 805

(p) Miscellaneous Provisions.

(1) A Department aggrieved by a decision of the Conference Chairman or Conference with respect to matters within the purview of the Conference shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief.

(2) Conferences may incorporate in the same manner and under the same terms as other units, pursuant to Section 708, provided that the Conference may select a state of incorporation. Conferences may organize corporations for the purpose of conducting meetings pursuant to Section 708.

(3) A Conference shall be a unit for purposes other than Section 709 of these By-Laws, as provided in Section 720 of these By-Laws.

(4) Conference Meetings shall be governed by the provisions of Section 1001 of the Manual of Procedure. Unless otherwise provided in Conference By-Laws, the Order of Business shall be as provided in Section 1002 of the Manual of Procedure.” (Disapproved)

B-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 607 - ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Amend Section 607, National By-Laws, by adding the following after the word “office” in the first sentence:

“, except as provided for in Section 522 of these By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure” (Disapproved)

B-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend Section 610 (a) (12), National By-Laws, by deleting the words “commissions or” (Approved)

B-7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 610 - Officers, Powers and Duties.

Amend Section 610 (d) (14), National By-Laws, by deleting the first paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Annual Budget. Prepare a tentative budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. Said budget shall set forth all anticipated income and estimated expense. Restricted funds shall be budgeted separately in every instance, and the budget shall be in balance. Final action must be taken on the adoption of the budget at the first stated meeting of the National Council of Administration, and, when adopted, the budget shall be the expenditure guide for the ensuing year.” (Approved)

B-8 (Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 617 - REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS-HOW ELECTED.

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting the second sentence of the second paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“The regional districts designated D, E, and H shall elect a National Council Member in even-numbered years for a two year term and Districts A, B, C, F, and J shall elect a National Council Member in odd-numbered years for a two year term.”

Amend Section 617 further by making changes and additions to the enumeration of Departments comprising the National Council Districts as set forth below:

“3. Maryland, New Jersey

4. District of Columbia, Delaware, Europe, Rhode Island”
(Approved)

B-9 (Proposed by Department of Wyoming)

SECTION 101 - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, National By-Laws, by inserting after the words “duty or retired” in the first sentence the following:

“or as a merchant marine officer or seaman who served in ocean-going service during World War II” (Disapproved)

B-10 (Proposed by Departments of Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, and Virginia)

SECTION 102 - APPLICATIONS - AFFILIATION OF NEW MEMBERS.

Amend Section 102, National By Laws, by deleting the third (3) paragraph in its entirety. (Disapproved)

B-11 (Proposed by Department of Texas)

SECTION 102 - APPLICATIONS - AFFILIATION OF NEW MEMBERS.

Amend Section 102, National By-Laws, by deleting the fourth paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Department Members At Large. Anyone eligible for membership

who is unable to join or does not desire membership in a post may become a Department Member At Large of the Department upon application to the Department Adjutant, proof of eligibility and payment of annual dues in amount to be determined by the Department Council of Administration. The Department Quartermaster shall transmit to the Quartermaster General ten dollars (\$10.00) of dues collected for each Member At Large on a monthly consolidated report.” (Approved)

B-12 (Proposed by Department of Delaware)

SECTION 111 - LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(a) **Life Members:** Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A member in good standing as a Member At Large may become a life member by paying the proper fee to the Adjutant General, or Department Adjutant in the case of Department Members At Large. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of an admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstatement fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster.

Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following fee schedule with changes in fees effective on January 1, 1998.

ATTAINED AGE	LIFE MEMBER FEE
Through 30	\$290.00
31-40	\$280.00
41-50	\$265.00
51-60	\$240.00
61-70	\$200.00
71-80	\$150.00
81 & over	\$100.00

Fee to be determined using applicant’s age at December 31 of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted, regardless of actual birth date.

Upon receipt of the required fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment, together with the life membership application of the individual, through the Department Quartermaster (if required by Department), to the Quartermaster General. The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received by him for life membership in a special fund called the "Life Membership," and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership ineligible for membership shall forfeit his life membership, in which case he shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A member who shall be discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit his life membership. In such event no refund of fees paid will be made.

Death of a life member following the issuance of the checks paying his per capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, his Department, and Post, shall not be a cause for a refund of said per capita tax for that calendar year.

(b) **Life Membership Committee:** The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund.

The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. An amount, as determined by Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, as provided by in the following plans:

(1) **Plan A, B and C Life Members:** To the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund for Plan A, B, and C life members, payments shall never be less than three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) per capita tax to the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the

United States, three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Department Headquarters, and three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

(2) **Plan D Life Members:** To the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund for Plan D life members, payments shall never be less than seven dollars (\$7.00) per capita tax to the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, seven dollars (\$7.00) to the Department Headquarters, and seven dollars (\$7.00) to the Post to which each life member belongs.” (Disapproved)

B-13 (Proposed by Departments of Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Pacific Areas and West Virginia)

SECTION 111 - LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(a) **Life Members:** Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A member in good standing as a Member At Large may become a life member by paying the proper fee to the Adjutant General, or Department Adjutant in the case of Department Members At Large. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of an admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster.

Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following fee schedule with changes in fees effective on January 1 of the year indicated.

<u>ATTAINED AGE</u>	<u>LIFE MEMBER FEE</u>	<u>LIFE MEMBER FEE</u>	<u>LIFE MEMBER FEE</u>
	<u>1998 (PLAIN D)</u>	<u>2000 (PLAN E)</u>	<u>2004 (PLAN F)</u>
Through 30	\$220.00	\$265.00	\$310.00
31-40	210.00	255.00	295.00
41-50	195.00	235.00	275.00

51-60	175.00	210.00	245.00
61-70	150.00	180.00	210.00
71-80	115.00	135.00	160.00
81 & over	75.00	90.00	105.00

Fee to be determined using applicant’s attained age at December 31 of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted, regardless of actual birth date.

Upon receipt of the required fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment, together with the life membership application of the individual, through the Department Quartermaster, to the Quartermaster General. The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received by him for life memberships in a special fund called the “Life Membership Fund,” and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership as long as he shall live; provided, however, a life member who shall subsequently be found ineligible for membership shall forfeit his life membership, in which case he shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A member who shall be discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit his life membership. In such event no refund of fees paid will be made.

Death of a life member following the issuance of the checks paying his capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, his Department, and Post, shall not be a cause for a refund of said per capita tax for that calendar year.

(b) **Life Membership Committee:** The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund.

The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year

for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, as provided by in the following plans:

(1) **Plan A, B, and C Life Members:** To the extent funds are available in the Life membership Fund for Plan A, B, and C life members, payments shall never be less than three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) per capita tax to the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Department Headquarters, and three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

(2) **Plan D, E, and F Life Members:** To the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund for Plan D, E, and F life members, payments shall never be less than the following schedule. Payments to be made in an equal per capita tax amount to the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Department Headquarters, and the Post to which each life member belongs.

<u>Plan D Life Members</u> <u>after January 1, 1998</u>	<u>Plan E Life Members</u> <u>after January 1, 2000</u>	<u>Plan F Life Members</u> <u>after January 1, 2004</u>
\$5.00	\$6.00	\$7.00"
(Disapproved)		

B-14 (Proposed by Department of Oregon)

SECTION 111 - LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(a) **Life Members:** Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A member in good standing as a Member At Large may become a life member by paying the proper fee to the Adjutant General, or Department Adjutant in the case of Department Members At Large. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of an admission fee in accordance with section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member

otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster.

Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following fee schedule with changes in fees effective on January 1 of the year indicated:

<u>ATTAINED AGE</u>	<u>LIFE MEMBER FEE</u> <u>1998 (PLAIN D)</u>	<u>LIFE MEMBER FEE</u> <u>2000 (PLAN E)</u>	<u>LIFE MEMBER FEE</u> <u>2004 (PLAN F)</u>
Through 30	\$220.00	\$265.00	\$310.00
31-40	210.00	255.00	295.00
41-50	195.00	235.00	275.00
51-60	175.00	210.00	245.00
61-70	150.00	180.00	210.00
71-80	115.00	135.00	160.00
81 & over	75.00	90.00	105.00

Fee to be determined using applicant’s attained age at December 31 of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted, regardless of actual birth date.

Life Membership fees shall be raised only by vote of the National Convention. There will be no exceptions to this requirement.

Upon receipt of the required fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment, together with the life membership application of the individual, through the Department Quartermaster, to the Quartermaster General. The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received by him for life memberships in a special fund called the “Life Membership Fund”, and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership as long as he shall live; provided, however, a life member who shall subsequently be found ineligible for membership shall forfeit his life membership, in which case he shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A member who shall be discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit his life membership. In such event no refund of fees paid will be made.

Death of a life member following the issuance of the checks paying his capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, his Department, and Post, shall not be a cause for a refund of said per capita tax for that calendar year.

(b) **Life Membership Committee:** The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund.

The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership and, investing and reinvesting funds to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, as provided by in the following plans.

(1) **Plan A, B, and C Life Members:** To the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund for Plan A, B, and C life members, payments shall never be less than three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) per capita tax to the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Department Headquarters, and three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

(2) **Plan D, E, and F Life Members:** To the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund for Plan D, E, and F life members, payments shall never be less than the following schedule. Payments to be made in an equal per capita tax amount to the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Department Headquarters, and the Post to which each life member belongs.

<u>Plan D Life Members</u> <u>after January 1, 1998</u>	<u>Plan E Life Members</u> <u>after January 1, 2000</u>	<u>Plan F Life Members</u> <u>after January 1, 2004</u>
\$5.00 (Disapproved)	\$6.00	\$7.00"

SECTION 111 - LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(a) **Life Members:** Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A member in good standing as a Member-at-Large may become a life member by paying the applicable fee to the Adjutant General or Department Adjutant in the case of Department Members-at-Large. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of an admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and the payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster.

(b) **Life Membership Fees:** Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan D fee schedule effective January 1, 1998:

ATTAINED AGE	PLAN D LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEE
Through 30	\$245.00
31 to 40	235.00
41 to 50	215.00
51 to 60	195.00
61 to 70	165.00
71 to 80	125.00
81 and over	85.00

The applicable fee from the life membership fee schedule set forth herein will be determined using the applicant's attained age as of December 31st of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted regardless of actual date of birth.

Upon receipt of the applicable fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment together with the life membership applica-

tion of the individual to the Quartermaster General (or, if required by the Department, through the Department Quartermaster to the Quartermaster General). The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received for life membership in a special fund called the Life Membership Fund and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies or life membership fees of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership as long as the member shall live; provided, however, a life member who shall subsequently be found ineligible for membership shall forfeit such life membership, in which case such life member shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A life member who shall be discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit such life membership. In such event, no refund of fees paid will be made.

(c) **Life Membership Committee:** The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund. The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds, to be the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(d) **Per Capita Tax:**

(1) **Plan D:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) to the Department Headquarters, and five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

(2) **All Prior Plans:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science shall be paid in September of the current year for the fol-

lowing calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Department Headquarters, and three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

Death of a life member following issuance of the checks paying the member's per capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, Department and Post shall not be cause for a refund of such per capita tax for that calendar year." (Approved)

B-16 (Proposed by Departments of District of Columbia and Massachusetts)

SECTION 111 - LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(a) Life Members: Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A member in good standing as a Member At Large may become a life member by paying the applicable fee to the Adjutant General or Department Adjutant in the case of Department Members At Large. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of an admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster.

(b) Life Membership Fees: Life membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan D fee schedule effective September 1, 1997:

ATTAINED AGE	PLAN D LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEE
Through 30	\$220.00
31 to 40	210.00

41 to 50	195.00
51 to 60	175.00
61 to 70	150.00
71 to 80	115.00
81 and over	75.00

The applicable fee from the life membership fee schedule set forth herein will be determined using applicant's attained age as of December 31 of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted regardless of actual date of birth.

Upon receipt of the applicable fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment together with the life membership application of the individual to the Quartermaster General (or, if required by the Department, through the Department Quartermaster to the Quartermaster General). The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received for life memberships in a special fund called the Life Membership Fund and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies or life membership fees of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership as long as the member shall live; provided, however, a life member who shall subsequently be found ineligible for membership shall forfeit such life membership, in which case such life member shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A life member who shall be discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit such life membership. In such event, no refund of fees paid will be made.

The following life membership fee schedules are provided for incorporation in this proposed amendment in lieu of the fee schedule for a \$5.00 payout to provide for a \$5.50, \$6.00 or \$7.00 payout:

ATTAINED AGE	L/M FEE (\$5.50 Payout)	L/M FEE (\$6.00 Payout)	L/M FEE (\$7.00 Payout)
Through 30	\$245.00	\$265.00	\$310.00
31 - 40	235.00	255.00	295.00
41 - 50	215.00	235.00	275.00
51 - 60	195.00	210.00	245.00
61 - 70	165.00	180.00	210.00
71 - 80	125.00	135.00	160.00
81 & over	85.00	90.00	105.00

(c) Life Membership Committee: The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund. The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds, to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(d) Per Capita Tax:

(1) Plan D: An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than five dollars (\$5.00) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, five dollars (\$5.00) to the Department Headquarters, and five dollars (\$5.00) to the Post to which life member belongs.

(2) All Prior Plans: An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Department Headquarters, and three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

Death of a life member following issuance of the checks paying the member's per capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, Department and Post shall not be cause for a refund of such per capita tax for that calendar year.

(e) Effective Date: Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2 of Section 1301 of the National By-Laws, this amendment shall become effective on September 1, 1997." (Disapproved)

SECTION 111 - LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(a) **Life Members:** Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the proper life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A member in good standing as a Member At Large may become a life member by paying the applicable fee to the Adjutant General or Department Adjutant in the case of Department Members at Large. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of an admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster.

(b) **Life Membership Fees:** Life membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan D fee schedule effective September 1, 1997:

ATTAINED AGE	PLAN D LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEE
Through 30	\$220.00
31 to 40	210.00
41 to 50	195.00
51 to 60	175.00
61 to 70	150.00
71 to 80	115.00
81 and over	75.00

The applicable fee from the life membership fee schedule set forth herein will be determined using the applicant's attained age as of December 31st of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted regardless of actual date of birth.

Upon receipt of the applicable fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment together with the life membership applica-

tion of the individual to the Quartermaster General (or, if required by the Department, through the Department Quartermaster to the Quartermaster General). The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received for life memberships in a special fund called the Life Membership Fund and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies or life membership fees of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership as long as the member shall live; provided, however, a life member who shall subsequently be found ineligible for membership shall forfeit such life membership, in which case such life member shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A life member who shall be discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit such life membership. In such event, no refund of fees paid will be made.

(c) **Life Membership Committee:** The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund. The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds, to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(d) **Per Capita Tax:**

(1) **Plan D:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than five dollars (\$5.00) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, five dollars (\$5.00) to the Department Headquarters, and five dollars (\$5.00) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

(2) **All Prior Plans:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the fol-

lowing calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Department Headquarters, and three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

Death of a life member following issuance of the checks paying the member's per capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, Department and Post shall not be cause for a refund of such per capita tax for that calendar year.

(e) **Effective Date:** Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2 of Section 1301 of the National By-Laws, this amendment shall become effective on September 1, 1997." (Disapproved)

B-18 (Proposed by Department of New Jersey)

SECTION 111 - LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(a) **Life Members:** Any person who is a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may become a life member by payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster. A member in good standing as a Member-At-Large may become a life member by paying the applicable fee to the Adjutant General or Department Adjutant in the case of Department Members at Large. Any person otherwise eligible for membership, but not previously a member, may become a life member upon election to membership in accordance with Section 103, payment of an admission fee in accordance with Section 104 and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to Post Quartermaster. A former member otherwise eligible for reinstatement to membership may become a life member upon reinstatement to membership in accordance with Section 106, payment of such reinstating fee as may be assessed by the Post and submission of a life membership application and payment of the applicable life membership fee to the Post Quartermaster.

(b) **Life Membership Fees:** Life membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan D fee schedule effective January 1, 1998:

ATTAINED AGE	L/M FEE (\$5.50 Payout)
Through 30	\$245.00
31 - 40	235.00
41 - 50	215.00
51 - 60	195.00
61 - 70	165.00
71 - 80	125.00
81 & over	85.00

The applicable fee from the life membership fee schedule set forth herein will be determined using applicant's attained age as of December 31 of the current calendar year in which the application is submitted regardless of actual date of birth.

Upon receipt of the applicable fee, the Post Quartermaster shall immediately forward payment together with the life membership application of the individual to the Quartermaster General (or, if required by the Department, through the Department Quartermaster to the Quartermaster General). The life membership shall become effective immediately upon the receipt of the fee by the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General shall deposit all sums received for life memberships in a special fund called the Life Membership Fund and shall issue a suitable life membership card.

A life member shall not be subject to further membership dues levies or life membership fees of any kind and shall have all the benefits and privileges of Post, Department and National membership as long as the member shall live; provided, however, a life member who shall subsequently be found ineligible for membership shall forfeit such life membership, in which case such life member shall be entitled to a proportionate refund of life membership fees paid. A life member who shall be discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action shall forfeit such life membership. In such event, no refund of fees paid will be made.

(c) **Life Membership Committee:** The Life Membership Committee shall consist of the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General. Such committee shall also be known as the Board of Trustees of the Life Membership Fund. The Quartermaster General shall be treasurer of the Life Membership Committee and shall have custody of the Life Membership Fund. The Life Membership Committee shall administer the Life Membership Fund, investing and reinvesting funds, to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(d) **Per Capita Tax:**

(1) **Plan D:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership

Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than five dollars (\$5.00) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, five dollars (\$5.00) to the Department Headquarters, and five dollars (\$5.00) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

(2) **All Prior Plans:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Department Headquarters, and three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

Death of a life member following issuance of the checks paying the member's per capita tax for the next calendar year to National Headquarters, Department and Post shall not be cause for a refund of such per capita tax for that calendar year.

(e) **Effective Date:** Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2 of Section 1301 of the National By-Laws, this amendment shall become effective on September 1, 1997." (Disapproved)

B-19 (Proposed by Departments of Connecticut and New York)

SECTION 610 - OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (a) (6), National By-Laws, by inserting after the words "Adjutant General" the following:

"Assistant Adjutants General" (Disapproved)

B-20 (Proposed by Departments of Connecticut and New York)

SECTION 610 - OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (f) (12), National By-Laws, by deleting in its entirety and renumbering the remainder of the section. (Disapproved)

B-21 (Proposed by Departments of Connecticut and New York)

SECTION 610 - OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (g), National By-Laws, by adding the following:

“Assistant Adjutants General shall be full-time salaried officers of the organization.” (Disapproved)

B-22 (Proposed by Departments of Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Indiana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, and Washington)

SECTION 610 - OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (d) (13), National By-Laws, by adding the following:

“provided, however, that said compensation shall not exceed \$150,000 per annum.” (Disapproved)

B-23 (Proposed by Departments of Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Indiana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, and Washington)

SECTION 610 - OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (f) (10), National By-Laws, by adding the following:

“provided, however, that said compensation shall not exceed \$150,000 per annum.” (Disapproved)

B-24 (Proposed by Department of Mississippi)

SECTION 615 - NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

Amend Section 615, National By-Laws, by deleting “4. Political Action Committee” in the first paragraph and renumber.

Amend Section 615 further by deleting in its entirety sub-section (d) and redesignate sub-section (e) sub-section (d). (Disapproved)

B-25 (Proposed by Department of New Jersey)

**SECTION 617 - REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS - HOW ELECTED.**

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting the words “in excess of 70,000 members” in the first sentence of the second paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“in excess of 65,000 members” (Disapproved)

B-26 (Proposed by Departments of Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Indiana, New Jersey, New York and Washington)

**SECTION 618 - NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION -
COMPOSITION, POWERS AND DUTIES.**

Amend Section 618 (c), National By-Laws, by adding to the second paragraph the following:

“provided, however, that the salaries of the Quartermaster General and the Adjutant General respectively shall not exceed \$150,000 per annum.” (Disapproved)

B-27 (Proposed by Department of Washington)

SECTION 702 - POLITICS.

Amend Section 702, National By-Laws, by deleting the last paragraph in its entirety. (Disapproved)

B-28 (Proposed by Department of Mississippi)

SECTION 702 - POLITICS.

Amend Section 702, National By-Laws, by deleting in its entirety the last paragraph. (Disapproved)

B-29 (Proposed by Department of New Mexico)

SECTION 714 - CONTROL OF MAILING LISTS.

Amend Section 714, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“The names and address of the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be considered confidential and shall not be made available for commercial or political use.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the VFW, its National Organization or any subordinate Unit from soliciting or authorizing solicitation of its membership to benefit the purposes of the organization or soliciting its membership in support of the activities of a political action committee duly authorized and organized by the VFW.

Mailing lists provided by the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the use of subordinate units in contacting VFW members, shall contain the name, and current mailing address of all members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, including members-at-large as set forth in By-Laws’ Article I, Section 102, Members-At-Large, having a mailing address within the boundaries of the State, Territory, Foreign Possession or Country, making up such Department, and shall remain under the control of the Commander-in-Chief and shall be used only for such purposes as he may authorize.” (Disapproved)

B-30 (Proposed by Department of Colorado)

SECTION 714 - CONTROL OF MAILING LISTS.

Amend Section 714, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“The names and address of the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be considered confidential and shall not be made available for commercial or political use.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the VFW, its National Organization or any subordinate Unit from soliciting or authorizing solicitation of its membership in support of the activities of a Political Action Committee duly authorized and organized by the VFW.

Mailing lists provided by the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the use of subordinate units in contacting VFW members, shall contain the name, and current mailing address of all members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, including members-at-large as set forth in By-Laws’ Article I, Section 102, Members-At-Large, having a mailing address within the boundaries of the State, Territory, Foreign Possession or Country, making up such Department, and shall remain under the control of the Commander-in-Chief and shall be used only for such purposes as he may authorize.” (Disapproved)

B-31 (Proposed by Department of Colorado)

ARTICLE IX - DISCIPLINE.

Amend Article IX - Discipline, National By-Laws, by adding as a new section the following:

“Section 908 - Limitation of Actions - two years.

An action initiated accusing any member of committing an offense as set forth in Section 902 shall be commenced within two years after the cause of action accrues, and not thereafter.” (Disapproved)

B-32 (Proposed by Department of Alabama)

SECTION 1301 - AMENDMENTS.

Amend Section 1301, National By-Laws, by deleting the words, “fifteen days” in the first paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“thirty-five days” (Disapproved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

M-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 209 - CONSOLIDATION OF POSTS.

Amend Section 209, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the second paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“If such consolidation be so approved, the name, number and location to be assigned the consolidating Posts, must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of any and all the Posts consolidating present at a meeting called for such purpose, after at least two (2) weeks notice in writing has been given to all the members of the Posts concerned of such meeting and purpose. Such facts shall be certified to the Department Commander. The Department Commander shall forward such certification to the Commander-in-Chief, who shall issue without charge a Certificate of Charter reciting the facts of such consolidation. The Certificate of Charter shall rank from the date of the senior Post’s charter.” (Approved)

M - 2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 517 - OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN, DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

Amend Section 517 (a) (4) f 1, Manual of Procedure, by deleting all after the words, "Commander-in-Chief ;". (Approved)

M - 3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 517 - OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN, DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

Amend Section 517 (a) (4) f 3, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the words, "the Adjutant General and to". (Approved)

M - 4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 517 - OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN, DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

Amend Section 517 (a) (4) j, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the last sentence in its entirety. (Approved)

M - 5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 517 - OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN, DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

Amend Section 517 (a) (9) a, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the words, "Adjutant General, the", in the first sentence of the second paragraph. (Disapproved)

M - 6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS

Amend Article V, Manual of Procedure, by adding as a new Section the following:

"SECTION 522 - CONFERENCES (DIVISIONAL SOCIETIES).

(a) **Formation, Chartering.**

For certain limited purposes, Departments may be organized into Conferences which shall have authority to act only in furtherance of those purposes. Unlike Posts and Departments, a Conference is not an organization of members, but an organization of the Departments making up the Conference. Each Department retains all of its power and authority and the corresponding duties and obligations, except to the limited extent that a Conference may act as provided in the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

(b) **Governing Body; Composition.**

(c) **By-Laws.**

A Conference may adopt or amend By-Laws at an Annual Conference Meeting. Copies of By-Laws, including amendments, adopted by a Conference shall be forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief. No By-Laws or amendments adopted by a Conference shall become effective until reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief or his designee for compliance with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

For purposes of determining the two-thirds (2/3) vote necessary to adopt or amend Conference By-Laws, Department voting shall be governed by unit rule, notwithstanding other provisions in Conference By-Laws.

(d) **Conference Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees; Caucuses.**

In the event Conference By-Laws provide for special meetings, the By-Laws shall also provide for notice in writing to Departments of the time and place of such meeting and the business to be transacted, such notice to be given in sufficient time to afford a reasonable opportunity for attendance. No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that for which the meeting was called.

(e) **Surrender or Forfeiture of Charter.**

(f) **Suspension and Revocation of Charter.**

(g) **Conference Dues.**

(h) **Solicitation; Fund-raising.**

With respect to fund-raising activities incident to the conduct of Conference Meetings, such activities may only be undertaken with a prior vote of a Conference Meeting. The Conference shall assure that solicitations, activities and projects do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring opprobrium or embarrassment upon the Conference, the Departments organized into it or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The name, seals, badges and emblems of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be used in connection with any solicitations, activities or projects not in compliance with the foregoing.

Fund-raising organizations or individuals conducting solicitations, activities or projects for a profit incident to a Conference Meeting shall not be engaged or used by a Conference for such purpose unless pursuant to a written agreement.

(i) **Eligibility to Office.**

(j) **Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

(k) **Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.**

Conference officers shall be nominated and elected by ballot or roll call at the annual Conference Meeting in a manner which shall be prescribed in Conference By-Laws.

Conference officers shall be installed before adjournment of the annual Conference Meeting. The installation shall be conducted by a member in good standing. The Conference Chairman shall select the installing officer.

(l) **Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.**

(1) **Duties of Conference Chairman.** Among the duties of a Conference Chairman, he shall:

a. Preside at all meetings of the Conference, conducting such meetings in accordance with Article X of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure and other applicable parliamentary procedures.

b. Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including Conference By-Laws and the Congressional Charter, National By-Laws, Ritual and Manual of Procedure and all lawful orders from proper authorities.

c. Insist that Conference business and activities are conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring opprobrium of embarrassment on the Conference or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

d. Decide all questions of law and usage governing the activities of the Conference, subject to an appeal pursuant to these By-Laws.

e. Approve all expenditure vouchers for Conference funds drawn upon the Treasurer, before the same shall be paid, and countersign all checks for the disbursement of Conference funds, unless Conference By-Laws otherwise provide.

f. Assure that the office of Conference Treasurer is bonded according to Section 703 of these By-Laws. The bond premium shall be paid from the funds of the Conference.

g. Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and that all the business of the Conference is handled with dispatch.

h. Enforce Conference and National Convention mandates and perform all other duties required of him by the Conference and Conference By-Laws, the National Convention and the National By-Laws, Ritual and Manual of Procedure and the laws and usages of the organization or orders from proper authority.

Failure without just cause to perform these duties may result in removal from office.

(2) **Duty of Conference Vice Chairmen.** The Conference Vice Chairmen shall assist the Conference Chairman in pre-

serving order, preside in the absence of the Conference Chairman, provide such advice and assistance as may be required and perform such other duties as are usually incident to such office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

(3) **Duty of Conference Treasurer.** Among the duties of a Conference Treasurer, he shall:

a. **Receipt and Custody of Funds and Other Property.** Receive and properly account for all monies due and payable to the Conference, as the By-Laws provide, and give an official written receipt for all monies, other than checks, received by him. He shall be the official accountable officer of the Conference and the Treasurer of all Committees of the Conference handling funds and in his care shall be placed all securities, funds and accountable property of the Conference.

b. **Disbursement of Funds.** Expend Conference funds only upon proper authorization of the Conference or in accordance with Conference By-Laws.

c. **Checks Countersigned.** All checks for the expenditure of Conference funds shall be numbered in sequence, and in addition to the signature of the Treasurer, shall be countersigned by the Conference Chairman, unless otherwise provided in Conference By-Laws.

d. **Bond.** Give good and sufficient security, in accordance with Section 703 and in an amount established in Conference By-Laws for the faithful discharge of his duties, the cost of which shall be paid from Conference funds.

e. **Reports - Financial.** Immediately following the close of the fiscal year, prepare in detail a final statement of all monies received and expended during the year, together with cash balances at the beginning and end of the year, a statement of funds and cash and bank balances, and a statement as to the financial worth of the Conference.

f. **Transfer of Records and Funds.** He shall transfer to his successor in office, without delay, all books, records, papers, monies and other property of the Conference in his possession or under his control.

g. **General.** Comply with, and perform all other duties required of him by the Conference, Conference By-Laws, Conference Chairman, National Convention and the National By-Laws, Ritual and Manual of Procedure, the laws and usages of the organization and lawful orders from proper authority and perform such other duties as may be incident to his office.

(4) **Duty of Conference Secretary.** Among the duties of a Conference Secretary, he shall:

a. **Correspondence.** Be the official corresponding officer for the Conference. He shall attest to all official communications and reports with his signature and the seal of the Conference.

b. **Files.** Maintain complete files for the fol-

lowing:

1. Correspondence.
2. Copies of the Proof of Eligibility submitted by officers pursuant to Section 522j.
3. Such other files as may be directed by the Conference.

c. **Minutes.** Assure that a complete record is made of the minutes of all meetings of the Conference and preserve and distribute copies of same as directed. He shall call the roll or, under his supervision, cause the same to be called at all official meetings and shall read to the body assembled, or cause to be read under his supervision, all official communications, resolutions, or other information pertinent to the meeting and consistent with the records of his office.

d. **Reports.** As directed by the Conference Chairman or Conference Meeting, compile and render such reports and data as is consistent with the general duties of his office, insofar as his records will permit.

e. **Transfer of Records.** He shall transfer to his successor in office, without delay, all books, records, papers and other property of the Conference in his possession or under his control.

f. **General.** Comply with, and perform all other duties required of him by the Conference, Conference By-Laws, Conference Chairman, National Convention and the National By-Laws, Ritual and Manual of Procedure, the laws and usages of the organization and lawful orders from proper authority and perform such other duties as may be incident to his office.

(5) **Duty of Conference Chaplain.** The Conference Chaplain shall, during the Conference Meeting, see that fitting tribute is paid to our departed comrades. He shall perform such other duties as may be usually incident to his office or as may from time to time be required of him by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

(m) **Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers.**

(n) **Voting.**

(o) **Incorporation of Provisions Applicable to Departments.**

(p) **Miscellaneous Provisions.**

(q) **Candidates for National Office.**

Candidates for National Office shall not campaign outside their Conference before August 1 of the year preceding the election. Travel outside the candidates home conference for campaign purposes, by the candidate or others representing the candidate or acting on his behalf, shall be limited to regular meetings of the various Conferences, Department Conventions and the National Convention. (Disapproved)

M-7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 708 - Incorporation of Units—Permission to Incorporate.

Amend Section 708, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the word “Constitution” in the first paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following, “Congressional Charter”. (Approved)

M-8 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1101 - FORMATION, CONTROL, AND DISBANDMENT OF AUXILIARIES.

Amend Section 1101 (f) (1), Manual of Procedure, by deleting the third (3) paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Budget. No less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting of the National Council of Administration of the Ladies Auxiliary at which the annual budget is adopted, the National Treasurer shall submit a proposed budget to the National President and each member of the National Council of Administration of the Ladies Auxiliary. Immediately following the adoption of the annual budget by the National Council of Administration of the Ladies Auxiliary, she shall submit a copy of the approved budget to the Commander-in-Chief.” (Approved)

M-9 (Proposed by Department of Nebraska)

SECTION 101 - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by adding at the end of the “Eligibility Guide” the following:

“Merchant Marines of the United States	7 Dec	1941
Service beyond the United States of America	2 Mar	1946
(territorial limits for 30 consecutive days or		
60 nonconsecutive days).” (Disapproved)		

M-10 (Proposed by Departments of Nebraska and Wyoming)

SECTION 101 - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by adding at the end of the “Eligibility Guide” the following:

“Merchant Marines of the United States	8 Sept	1939
Service beyond the United States of America	27 July	1954

(territorial limits for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days).” (Disapproved)

M-11 (Proposed by Department of Connecticut)

SECTION 101 - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by adding at the end of the section, a new eligibility category as follows:

“National Defense -	27 June 1950
Service Medal	to a date to be
(30 consecutive days or	determined
60 days not consecutive duty	
outside the continental	
limits of the United States).”	(Disapproved)

M-12 (Proposed by Departments of Colorado and New Mexico)

SECTION 714 - CONTROL OF MAILING LISTS.

Amend Section 714, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the second paragraph in its entirety. (Disapproved)

M-13 (Proposed by Department of Minnesota)

SECTION 803 - MANUFACTURE AND USE OF SEALS, EMBLEMS, BADGES, INSIGNIA AND UNIFORMS.

Amend Section 803, Manual of Procedure, by inserting the following at the end of the last paragraph of sub-heading “Optional Uniforms and Headgear”:

“That if organizational emblems are worn on VFW Color Guard Headgear, one of them must be the Cross of Malta.” (Approved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

R - 1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading “ORDER OF BUSINESS (Post)” on page 16, paragraph 2, by deleting the word “government” in the second sentence and inserting in lieu thereof the word “constitution”. Disapproved)

R-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "INSTITUTING NEW POST", sub-heading Officers' Obligation on page 46, by deleting the word "Constitution," in the third line. (Approved)

R -3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS", sub-heading Officers' Obligation on page 50, by deleting the word "Constitution," in the first sentence of paragraph 1. (Approved)

R - 4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "**INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS**" on page 51, sixth (6) paragraph by deleting the words "Constitution, Ritual and the By-Laws" and inserting in lieu thereof the following "By-Laws and Ritual". (Approved)

R - 5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (National and Department)**", sub-heading Officers' Obligation on page 60, by deleting the word, "Constitution,". (Approved)

R - 6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (National and Department)**" on page 61, by deleting the following in the first line of the first paragraph, "Constitution, Ritual and the By-Laws" and inserting in lieu thereof the words, "By-Laws and Ritual". (Approved)

R - 7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading **“INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (National and Department)”** on page 61, by deleting the word “Constitution,” in the second sentence of the sixth paragraph. (Approved)

R - 8 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading **“INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (National and Department),”** sub-heading Prayer on page 62, by deleting the following in the first line “Constitution” and inserting in lieu thereof the following, “Congressional Charter”. (Approved)

R - 9 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading **“INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (National and Department),”** sub-heading Commander-in-Chief’s Obligation on page 63, by deleting the following in the first sentence “Constitution, Ritual and By-Laws” and inserting in lieu thereof the words, “By-Laws and Ritual”. (Approved)

R-10 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading **“INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (National and Department),”** sub-heading Prayer on page 63, by deleting the word “Constitution,” in the first line. (Approved)

R-11 (Proposed by Department of Ohio)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading “Special Prayers” on page 4 by adding at the end of the section on page 8 the following:

“A Prayer for Our Founding Fathers

Almighty Father, as we honor the founding fathers of our beloved Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America, we wish to recall their motives.

As dedicated citizens of our Great Republic, they answered the call to duty for the preservation of our national existence, to maintain our sov-

ereignty and guarantee our continued general welfare and by this new refined dedication, showed how much they valued the United States of America.

This new dedication showed how much they cared for their comrade buddies, their home and the people back home.

You know, Oh Lord, Heavenly Father, with the blessings and happiness they deserve, grant that “One Nation Under God”: may continue to prosper now and for the future ages.

God Bless the Veterans.

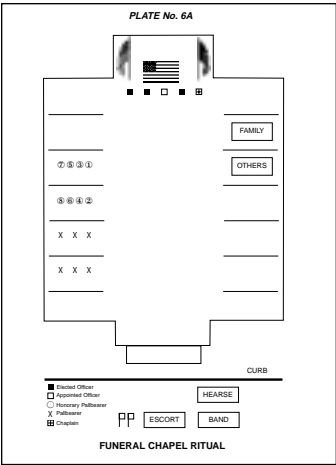
Amen.” (Disapproved)

R-12 (Proposed by Department of Illinois)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the sub-caption “Chaplain” on page 17, by deleting the word “departed” in the first line of the prayer. (Approved)

R13 (Proposed by Department of Kentucky)

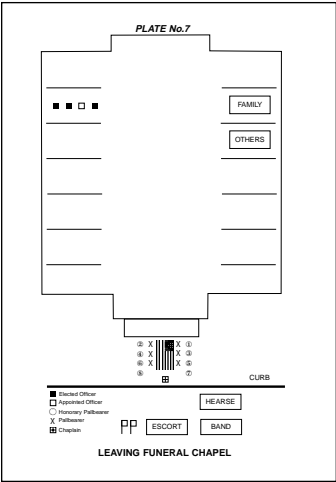
Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars by inserting after PLATE 6 on page 80 the following: PLATE 6A



(Disapproved)

R-14 (Proposed by Department of Kentucky)

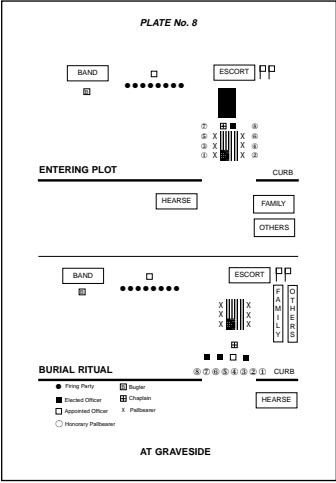
Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars by deleting PLATE 7 on page 81 and inserting in lieu thereof the following: PLATE 7



(Disapproved)

R-15 (Proposed by Department of Kentucky)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars by deleting PLATE 8 on page 84 and inserting in lieu thereof the following: PLATE 8



(Disapproved)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL RESOLUTIONS**

No. 201 (Submitted by Department of Connecticut)

NO AGE LIMIT FOR SONS OF VFW

(Disapproved)

No. 202 (Submitted by Department of Iowa)

IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

(Disapproved)

No. 203 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

URGE ELIMINATION OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP FOR LADIES AUXILIARY
MEMBERSHIP

(Disapproved)

No. 204 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Organization require recruited members-at-large to provide documented proof of eligibility; exactly as required by individual posts. (Approved)

No. 205 (Submitted by Departments of Connecticut and Nebraska)

AMEND CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER, SECTION 5— MEMBERSHIP

(Disapproved)

No. 206 (Submitted by Departments of Nebraska and Wyoming)

CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER AMENDMENT, SECTION 5—
MEMBERSHIP

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, petition Congress to amend their Congressional Charter to allow membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, if they served thirty (30) consecutive days or sixty (60) non consecutive days out of

the continental limits of the United States of America and have been issued discharges or DD 214 forms with proof of such service be allowed to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Congressional Charter, Section 5— Membership be amended to read:

(CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER)

AN ACT

SECTION 5— MEMBERSHIP

A person may not be a member of the corporation created by this Act unless that person—

(1)served honorably as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States in a foreign war, insurrection, or expedition, which service has been recognized as campaign-medal service and is governed by the authorization of the award of a campaign badge by the government of the United States; or

(2)while a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, served honorably on the Korean peninsula or in its territorial waters for not less than 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 days, after June 30, 1949;

(3)while a member serving in the Merchant Marines of the United States who served honorably beyond the United States territorial limits for 30 consecutive days or 60 non consecutive days with honorable discharges or DD 214 forms, from 7 December 1941 to 2 March 1946. (Approved)

No. 207 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

RESERVE ONE PAGE OF VFW MAGAZINE FOR VFW NATIONAL HOME

(Disapproved)

No. 208 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL TOWER

(Disapproved)

No. 209 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

SUBTRACT DECEASED FROM 100% MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

(Disapproved)

No. 210 (Submitted by Department of California)

PROHIBIT POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS

(Disapproved)

No. 211 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

CONTINUATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

(Disapproved)

No. 301 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

TERM LIMITS

(Disapproved)

No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Georgia)

NAME LAKE CITY, FLORIDA VA HOSPITAL COLIN P. KELLY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we respectfully request that the Veterans Administration Hospital, located at Lake City, Florida be named in honor of the late Colin P. Kelly. (Approved)

No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)

MANDATE ENGLISH AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE
UNITED STATES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we reaffirm mandates of previous conventions to seek legislation mandating English as the official language of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we seek legislation to: 1) limit bilingual education to short term transitional programs only; and 2) effect a speedy return to voting ballots in English only; and 3) make more opportunities available to immigrants for learning and maintaining the English language a condition for naturalization; and 4) enact legal protections for the English language, at state and national levels through the designation of English as our official language. (Approved)

No. 304 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)

REQUEST FOR CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF
THE FEDERAL FLAG CODE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we call upon our representatives in the Congress of the United States to have a complete review of the existing Federal Flag Code so that we secure consistent respect for the flag of the United States of America. (Approved)

No. 305 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)

FLAG DESECRATION

(Disapproved)

No. 306 (Submitted by Department of Missouri)

ENDORSE RESTORATION OF THE KANSAS CITY LIBERTY MEMORIAL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record as being supportive of the restoration, expansion, and continued operations of the World War I, Liberty Memorial, at Kansas City, Missouri. (Approved)

No. 307 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)

MAKE OUR NATIONAL FLAG A NATIONAL MONUMENT WHEREVER FLOWN

(Disapproved)

No. 308 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)

PROTECTION OF DESECRATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

(Disapproved)

No. 309 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

AWARD THE MANUFACTURING OF THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR TO ANOTHER COMPANY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to urge President Clinton and Congress to reverse a Pentagon decision to continue doing business with this company; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this contract be awarded to another company whose integrity is above reproach. (Approved)

No. 310 (Submitted by Department of New York)

ERECT MEMORIAL ON TINIAN ISLAND (MARIANNA ISLANDS)

(Disapproved)

No. 311 (Submitted by Department of California)

ISSUANCE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL STAMP

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Postal Service to issue a stamp featuring the likeness of Audie L. Murphy thereon, in commemoration of his heroic deeds and service to the United States of America. (Approved)

No. 312 (Submitted by Department of Florida)

CONSTITUTIONAL POWER TO FUND VETERANS EARNED
ENTITLEMENTS

(Disapproved)

No. 313 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF THE ATOMIC BOMB STAMP OF
AUGUST 6, 1945

(Approved)

No. 314 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE SALE OF PERSHING HALL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any change in present regulations covering this property that would permit its outright sale, and therefore violate the original purpose of the acquisition of the property, including its original objective, that of a memorial. (Approved)

No. 315 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR OF 1898

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee in support of any existing efforts to create a commemorative stamp honoring the 100th

anniversary of the Spanish-American War. (Approved)

No. 316 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

WORLD WAR II NATIONAL MEMORIAL

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States strongly and enthusiastically support the WWII memorial site location between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall referred to as the Rainbow Pool site; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we encourage swift approval of a revised design concept so that the memorial can be dedicated early in the next century. (Approved)

No. 317 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE USS MAINE MEMORIAL IN KEY WEST, FLORIDA, BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we go on record as being supportive of the continued maintenance of the USS Maine Memorial in Key Largo, Florida, by the Department of the U. S. Navy. (Approved)

No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Organization will:

(a) ensure routine distribution to the field of pertinent, credible and responsible information on a routine basis and, as requested, to provide such information about other POW/MIA organizations as may be needed by the Departments;

(b) encourage participation in the program by veterans groups of other friendly nations such as our NATO and Far Eastern allies;

(c) encourage exchange of information among State POW/MIA Chairmen, to include publishing up-to-date lists of POW/MIA Chairmen; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each Department exercise maximum initiative to maintain the vitality and thrust of the POW/MIA program at Department levels by encouraging such actions as:

(a) display of the black POW/MIA flag, subordinate to the U.S. Flag, at any function at which it is proper to fly the U.S. Flag;

(b) encourage support of information exchange at Post levels;

(c) appoint an interested member at the Post level to act as the POW/MIA project officer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Organization of the VFW supports the annually announced POW/MIA Recognition Day. (Approved)

No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO RESOLVE THE KOREAN WAR POW/MIA ISSUE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW is encouraged by the recent U.S.-North Korean Joint Operation to resolve the status of Americans still unaccounted for in Korea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that with renewed vigor, the VFW urge the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments to increase their contact with the North Korean and Chinese governments, to pursue and expand the current joint effort to include the live POW issue and thus seek new opportunities to resolve this humanitarian issue as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW, in keeping with United States laws and in consultation with the Korean and U.S. governments, continue its active efforts to resolve the issue of Korean War POW/MIAs. (Approved as Amended)

No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VFW SUPPORTS KUWAIT'S DEMAND FOR AN ACCOUNTING OF ITS MIAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, that we strongly urge the United Nations, the United States Government and other governments to take such action as necessary either unilaterally, through our allies, or the United Nations, that will force Iraq to account for those Kuwaiti citizens still missing. (Approved)

No. 404 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THE LESSONS OF THE COLD WAR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the lessons of the Cold and Gulf Wars taught us that our peace, our freedom and our security can best be achieved by remaining united in common purpose with our many allies and friends whereby we share both the danger and security burden and by maintaining a national defense which in combination with our allies and friends, is equal to those contin-

uing threats; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in contrast to the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, the lessons of the Gulf War are apparent: to ensure victory in future wars, the United States, led by resolute leadership and backed by unwavering public support, should quickly and decisively engage the full range of its military power until the threat to our security is eliminated. (Approved)

No. 405 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LIMIT FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. BUSINESSES AND PROPERTIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation to limit foreign ownership of United States corporations, companies, businesses and property and industrial technologies and/or processes which could become vital or sensitive to the national defense of the U.S. and which will protect the economy of the United States. (Approved)

No. 406 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TAKE ACTION ON THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress in the strongest terms to heed these ominous warnings and focus their attention on the immigration problem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition the President and the Congress to expand and strengthen the Customs and Immigration services and the U.S. Coast Guard, and enact such emergency measures as necessary to prevent smuggling of illegal aliens and stop, detain and deport potential terrorists or those with ties to terrorist groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, as appropriate and when well trained and supervised, military resources be employed to assist in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the country. (Approved as Amended)

No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR CASTRO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Government to continue its present policy of no trade with Communist Cuba and no diplomatic recognition of that communist state and to increase the economic and political pressure on Castro; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the U.S. Government to

use all measures, short of violence and/or invasion, to increase the pressure on Castro in conjunction with his isolation, to hasten the time until Castro's dictatorship is overthrown and Cuba can regain its freedom. (Approved)

No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PUNISH TERRORISTS NOW

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge that the U.S. should take decisive action against all terrorists and bring to justice those responsible and to serve as a warning that all terrorists — no matter what country gives them refuge — will be hunted down and brought to justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to urge decisive action in the war on terrorism by:

(a) remaining on the offensive against terrorists rather than passively remaining on the defense;

(b) instituting and pressing our allies to support a quarantine on those "outlaw countries" guilty of inciting, harboring or aiding and abetting terrorists;

(c) holding all countries accountable for the security of American citizens traveling within their borders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Congress should authorize and the President should declare a quarantine against the outlaw Qadhafi regime of Libya and other terrorist states found to support and harbor terrorists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our civilian leaders and military commanders should take all necessary steps to ensure U.S. servicemen and women stationed abroad are adequately protected against the threat of terrorist attacks and that both foreign governments and U.S. authorities be held accountable for such lapses in security that endanger the lives of our servicemen and women. (Approved as Amended)

No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STRATEGIC DEFENSE IS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support both a deployable theater missile defense and a strategic missile defense before the end of this century as a priority defense requirement. (Approved)

No. 410 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW calls on all elected and appointed officials to publicly recognize the major contributions and sacrifices made by those in military service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our elected and appointed officials acknowledge the professionalism of our servicemen and women by ending the erosion of entitlements and expanding the benefits of service and by so doing, show that this nation cares for those who have served and sacrificed. (Approved)

No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE LIFTING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT BAN ON HOMOSEXUALS IN THE ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we unequivocally oppose the efforts of the President and homosexual organizations to force the military services to accept and/or retain homosexuals and urge that this matter be taken before the Supreme Court to seek final judicial reaffirmation of the homosexual exclusion policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the aforementioned Code should be rewritten in an effort to dismiss any possible question of the denial of civil rights based on moral, religious or ethical behavior, as it is not the intent to inflict that upon said persons, rather a just concern for the good order, discipline, stability and readiness of our Armed Forces and its operations. (Approved)

No. 412 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE U.S. COAST GUARD

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to provide the funding necessary for the Coast Guard to carry out its numerous duties, including but not limited to, drug interdiction and enforcement, military readiness, pollution control, maritime safety, search and rescue missions as well as their many other duties and missions. (Approved)

No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STANDING FIRM FOR DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will always stand firm for liberty, and in furtherance of the ideals of liberty and democracy, we support a foreign policy that nourishes the newly won liberties in Europe and elsewhere, and we maintain our mil-

itary strength against both the possibility of the reversal of Europe's liberties and the threats to other important regions of the world.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 414 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL STRATEGY OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to support a national strategy of peace through strength, the general principles of which should be:

(a) maintaining a strong economy at home and protecting our overseas resources of energy and vital raw materials;

(b) maintaining an American military presence in Europe and Asia to stabilize the military balance in these regions and help our friends and allies to defend themselves from aggression;

(c) maintaining such strategic, nuclear and conventional military forces (including Active, Reserve and National Guard components) trained and equipped with such high technology weapons and equipment and with sufficient bases and infrastructure which in the judgment of our military leaders are more than equal to the current threats and adequate to meet our current defense requirements;

(d) helping formerly communist controlled countries in their process of converting to freely elected democratic governments;

(e) maintaining effective security and intelligence capabilities to prevent strategic surprise from any quarter; and

(f) employing the leadership necessary to inspire, focus and unite the national will and international unity to further our goal of peace and freedom. (Approved)

No. 415 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HALT THE EROSION OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we reject deep reductions in our national intelligence agencies, instead supporting appropriate expansion and funding to ensure that we will have adequate warnings of future political, military, economic or technological changes that would increase the risks to our national security and vital national interests abroad and that Congress appropriate necessary funds to strengthen the intelligence services. (Approved)

No. 416 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Government of the United States to increase its military aid and assistance to the Republic of Korea by providing modern state of the art weapons and technology to safeguard her freedom, and promote the security in the Pacific and Asian regions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States, in concert with its allies, bring pressure to bear on North Korea to comply with the nuclear safeguard accord of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to be a responsible country in the community of nations and to come to the table for peaceful dialogue directly between the South and North. (Approved as Amended)

No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that to prevent further endangerment to our troops, we support the view that unless unforeseen circumstances arise, the U.S. forces assigned to Operation Joint Guard should be gradually withdrawn from the former Yugoslavia while transferring remaining responsibilities to other NATO members. (Approved as Amended)

No. 418 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ASSIST VIETNAM'S RECOVERY OF MIAS AS A SIGN OF GOOD FAITH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that at each level of the VFW — National, Department, District, County Council, Post — strenuous efforts be made to collect any information which might be of value in determining the fate of Vietnam's 300,000 MIAs and of assistance in the recovery of their remains; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge all levels of the VFW to solicit all Vietnam veteran members (and non-members) for any information or material that could be used to determine the fate of Vietnamese MIAs and their graves. Such information and material include battlefield souvenirs especially if they contain names or other identifying information; personal effects such as photos, letters, identification documents, taken from casualties; sketch maps, photos, overlays (annotated with dates and locations if possible) which would be of help in identifying Vietnamese grave sites; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VFW National Headquarters publicize this effort and provide Departments with materials which might be used in further publicizing our efforts and that the VFW Washington Office act as the collecting point and repository of all such information obtained from our members and the public at large; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on subsequent trips to the region by VFW National Officers, such information be turned over to Vietnamese authorities as an expression of our desire to assist them in recovering their MIAs and to encourage their greater effort in helping us reach the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs. (Approved)

No. 419 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE U. S. FORCES UNDER FOREIGN COMMAND

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any plan or directive placing U.S. military forces under the command of foreign military officers including those who are operating exclusively under orders from the United Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress be urged to examine Presidential Decision Directive 25 to determine if any Constitutional authority has been misused, and if so, to find an appropriate remedy. (Approved)

No. 420 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that while recognizing the settlement of the legitimacy question remains an issue between the two countries we support and urge the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United Nations and other international bodies so that those agencies can be useful in fostering a spirit of cooperation and assisting the resolution of the legitimacy question; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to adhere strictly to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state of the art military equipment, weapons and technology to include the previously approved sale of F-16 aircraft to the Republic of China on Taiwan as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capabilities to provide for military balance and stability in the area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the United States Government to employ the full range of its economic, diplomatic and military influence if it is necessary to contain the overtly aggressive posture of the Peoples Republic of China and to use this influence to further the peaceful settlement of remaining disputes. (Approved as Amended)

No. 421 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO STUDY WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record as opposing assignment of women within the Armed Forces to jobs that call for them to aggressively seek out, close with and kill or capture enemy forces; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress to establish an independent commission to examine all facets of the security, training, assignments and role of women in the military and to withhold approval of any further personnel changes until the commission has had time to make its recommendations. (Approved)

No. 422 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RETAIN THE SELECTIVE SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW goes on record as supporting the ongoing existence of the Selective Service System in its stand-by status and urges the United States Congress to provide the funds necessary to retain the Selective Service System. (Approved)

No. 423 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MONITOR THE PANAMA CANAL CAREFULLY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress to closely monitor conditions in the Republic of Panama, to be prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the Canal and to ensure continued freedom of passage, and to carefully reexamine the conditions of Panama and the region before the scheduled turnover with a view to balancing the views, concerns and interests of Panama, its neighbors and the United States. (Approved)

No. 424 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL FOR SERVICE IN BOSNIA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call for award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in the following Balkans operations (retroactive to June 1, 1992): Provide Comfort (air drops over Bosnia and medical teams in Croatia), Deny Flight (air missions flown from Italy and carriers in the Adriatic Sea), Able Sentry (Macedonia), Sharp Guard/Maritime Monitor (enforcement of embargo) and Joint Endeavor (Bosnia) and Joint Guard until terminated. (Approved)

No. 425 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR A SPECIAL SERVICE MEDAL
FOR "ATOMIC" VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record in support of legislation which would award a special service medal for "Atomic" veterans. (Approved)

No. 426 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATO ENLARGEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the enlargement of the NATO Alliance and the extension of the United States mutual defense commitment to the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as it is important to the security of that region, our own vital interests in the region as well as world peace; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this enlargement be accomplished in a non-threatening manner so as not to force other countries into an opposing alliance and that in order to project a peaceful image we urge consideration be given to adoption of a declared policy that U.S. forces and weapons will not be stationed, based or deployed (except for training) in the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. (Approved as Amended)

No. 427 (Submitted by Department of Kentucky)

CONDEMN EL SALVADOR'S ACTIONS

(Disapproved)

No. 428 (Submitted by Department of Vermont)

KEEPING FAITH WITH THE AMERICAN MILITARY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to provide written factual assurances to the Congress, the public and our Military that legal protections are in place to bring to trial those guilty of murder or assassination of members of our military; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Congress of the United States and the Administration find an agreeable solution to insure that the murderers in El Salvador are brought to trial and punished. (Approved as Amended)

No. 429 (Submitted by Department of New York)

DE-NORMALIZATION OF TIES WITH VIETNAM

(Disapproved)

No. 430 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

WITHHOLD AID UNTIL FULL ACCOUNTING OF POW/MIA'S

(Disapproved)

No. 431 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)

RESTORE CONGRESSIONAL CONTROL ON UNITED NATIONS
WORLD HERITAGE SITES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to review this action to restore congressional controls and to cancel all United Nations controls over territories of the United States, and that the Congress shall take immediate actions to restore its controls, and that the Congress shall assume its constitutional roles, as provided in Article IV, Section 3; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the leadership of the nation be reminded that at the cost of nearly 1,000,000 lives countless years of debilitated and diminished lives of the victims of battle, the missing and orphaned, have all endured to insure the freedom and independence of the people and their nation for over 220 years. If the need has arisen, they are there, and as always, they are willing to pay the price again, again and again! (Approved as Amended)

No. 432 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to urge the President of the United States of America and every member of the U.S. Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those U.S. Servicemen who are still Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. (Approved)

No. 433 (Submitted by Department of California)

REQUESTING THE NAMING OF THE NEXT UNITED STATES SHIP (CARRIER) IN HONOR OF LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the United States Navy name the next commissioned Nuclear Carrier in honor of Lyndon Baines Johnson. (Approved)

No. 434 (Submitted by Department of California)

BAN MANUFACTURE, SALE AND USE OF
DEPLETED URANIUM WEAPONS

(Disapproved)

No. 435 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT FOR THE POW/MIA FLAG TO FLY OVER FEDERAL POST
OFFICE'S AND FEDERAL BUILDINGS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record in support of flying the POW/MIA flag at post offices and federal buildings. (Approved as Amended)

No. 436 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

REQUIRE ALL EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD CITIZENS TO REGISTER
FOR MILITARY DRAFT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States to support legislation that would require all United States citizens, both male and female, be required to register for the Military Draft upon reaching their 18th birthday. (Approved)

No. 437 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

MEDAL ISSUANCE WITH COMBAT ACTION RIBBON

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Secretary of the Navy to issue a medal in conjunction with the Combat Action Ribbon, of such design as to indicate the arduous conditions under which it is earned. (Approved)

No. 438 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

HOUSE RESOLUTION 409

(Disapproved)

No. 439 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

POW FLAGS TO BE FLOWN ON ALL FEDERAL BUILDINGS

(Disapproved)

No. 440 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE A TOTAL BAN ON LAND MINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that while sharing concern for the growing humanitarian problems of land mines, we stand with our military leaders and for the continued security of our troops in opposing a total ban on land mines until such time as suitable replacement capability is developed and fielded or a comprehensive global ban can be completed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we agree with and support the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposal to ban “dumb” anti-personnel land mines without a self-destruct or deactivation capability and recommend it be made the cornerstone of a comprehensive global treaty. (Approved)

No. 441 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STORAGE FOR FISSILE NUCLEAR MATERIALS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge the Congress and the President to consider legislation that will permit the aforementioned American private venture to proceed in order to create an American-Russian partnership that will:

1. permit the monitored storage of spent fuel from all nuclear power countries in the world under American aegis at no cost to the American taxpayer in an isolated and very benign manner on the Island of Wake;

2. permit the private American venture to complement, not compete with ongoing federal government efforts to create a permanent storage site in the continental United States;

3. foreclose reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel as a commercial venture thereby stopping the proliferation of plutonium and other fissile materials and thus depriving international terrorism of a powerful weapon; and

4. Permit the Russian federal to receive a legitimate income from a free enterprise venture that will give it necessary, responsible fiscal underpinning at a critical time in that nation’s democratic process. (Approved)

No. 442 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

ISSUE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION TO MEMBERS OF U. S. NAVY
ARMED GUARD

(Disapproved)

No. 443 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE DOWNSIZING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT POW/MIA OFFICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we believe the downsizing of the Defense Department's POW/MIA Office would have the following effects:

It would slow the momentum of a POW/MIA effort that has taken years to develop.

It would prevent us from taking full advantage of new opportunities that might become available to resolve this issue.

It would send the wrong signal that the United States is downsizing its effort to recover our missing men to those countries where the search for our men still continues, or as in the case in Korea, where the search has just begun; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars goes on record as adamantly and unalterably opposed to any downsizing of the effort or of the resources put into the effort to reach the fullest possible accounting of our missing men. (Approved as Amended)

No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REFORM OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ACCESS TO VA HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress enact legislation affecting eligibility of VA health care by providing all veterans with mandated access to the full continuum of VA health care. (Approved as Amended)

No. 602 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ADEQUATELY FUND THE VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress in its annual appropriations, to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs construction to allow it to carry out a program of modernization or replacement of aging facilities, which includes a sound system for setting construction priorities, which in combination will ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nation's veter-

ans. (Approved)

No. 603 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS' BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to pass a budget and appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which will fully fund and maintain the integrity of the benefits and entitlements programs and enhance Department of Veterans Affairs health care system. (Approved as Amended)

No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND THE UNIFORMED SERVICES FORMER SPOUSES' PROTECTION ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, seek to amend PL 97-252, "The Former Spouses' Protection Act, " to allow for the termination of court-ordered payments to ex-military spouses upon remarriage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars seek legislation that would prohibit forcing a service member from making payments to his former spouse on the date the service member first becomes eligible to receive retired pay if the service member elects to remain in the service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars seek legislation that ensures any increase in retired pay resulting from increased service or promotion after a divorce is final becomes the sole property of the service member. (Approved as Amended)

No. 605 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF RETIREMENT PAY AND VETERANS DISABILITY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly advocate legislation to be enacted to permit the concurrent receipt of longevity military retirement pay without reduction of the Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation. (Approved)

No. 606 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMENDED TAX RETURNS FOR MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress amend current law whereby a military retiree will be allowed to file amended tax returns involving receipt of VA disability compensation beyond the current three-year limitation. (Approved as Amended)

No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXCLUDE GUARD AND RESERVE INCOME WHEN DETERMINING
ELIGIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation that standardizes Unemployment Insurance eligibility rules to the extent that Guard and Reserve income will be excluded for purposes of determining eligibility for Unemployment Insurance. (Approved as Amended)

No. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISHMENT OF A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE
ON VETERANS BENEFITS POLICY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation authorizing establishment of a White House Conference on Veterans Policy with the mission of improving veterans benefits. (Approved as Amended)

No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM (FEHBP) FOR
MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to offer military retirees the full range of FEHBP under the same terms as do all other federal departments, agencies, and the post office. (Approved)

No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FULL FUNDING FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE
MOBILIZATION INSURANCE PROGRAM (MIP)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the Department of Defense to ensure full

funding for the continuance of the Mobilization Insurance Program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense to honor in full, the claims submitted by those reservists and guardsmen who paid monthly premiums into the Mobilization Insurance Program. (Approved as Amended)

No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING (OJT) PROGRAM FOR RECENTLY SEPARATED VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to take immediate action towards the creation of and implementation of a nationwide On-the-Job-Training Program, on a pilot basis, for recently separated service members. (Approved)

No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THIRD-PARTY REIMBURSEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that legislation be enacted to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to collect and retain all third-party reimbursements without offset from its appropriation. (Approved as Amended)

No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ENTITLEMENT TO NURSING HOME CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend Public Law 104-262 to mandate the provision of nursing home care for all veterans. (Approved)

No. 614 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REFORM OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ACCESS TO VA HEALTH CARE

(Disapproved)

No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support veterans' preference in federal, state, and

local employment, as provided by a grateful nation, and oppose any and all efforts to reduce this preference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to speak out forcefully and publicly on the issue of veterans' preference. (Approved)

No. 616 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DOD MEDICARE SUBVENTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request Congress authorize Medicare Subvention to military treatment facilities. (Approved as Amended)

No. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE (VETS)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby go on record to urge the Congress of the United States to appropriate sufficient funds to support the current VETS mission. (Approved)

No. 618 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES (LVERS) AND DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (DVOPS)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby go on record to urge the Congress of the United States to appropriate sufficient funds to support the number of LVERS and DVOPS positions as required by Title 38. (Approved)

No. 619 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE CEMETERY AT FORMER CLARK AIR BASE IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Government, by legislative or administrative action, to seek a long term solution to the neglect of the Clark cemetery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that until a long term solution is reached the Veterans of Foreign Wars seek support from all available sources to assist the VFW Posts in the Philippines with the annual cost of

the repair and upkeep of the Clark Cemetery.
(Approved)

No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

BENEFITS FOR FILIPINO VETERANS AND SCOUTS WHO SERVED WITH THE U. S. ARMED FORCES DURING WWII

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to recognize veterans of the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II, as having been active service for purposes of equal benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars support additional legislation that directs the Secretary of Army to issue a certificate of service to every national of the Philippine Islands deemed by the Secretary to have performed any military service in aid of the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATION OF VETERANS PREFERENCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to enact legislation which provides that intentional violation of a provision of the Veterans' Preference Act is a "prohibited personnel practice" and therefore is subject to corrective and disciplinary action, and intervention by Office of the Special Counsel.
(Approved)

No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA MEDICARE SUBVENTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the swift enactment into law of legislation authorizing VA to collect and retain Medicare dollars. (Approved)

No. 623 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXCLUSIVE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to establish separate appropriations subcommittees exclusive to the Department of Veterans Affairs in both the House and Senate. (Approved)

No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FUNDING OF SBA VETERANS PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars support the strengthening and funding of an effective veterans entrepreneurship program in the U. S. Small Business Administration. (Approved)

No. 625 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish an open ended presumptive period until the medical and scientific community determines an appropriate time in which conditions associated with Gulf War service will manifest; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care for all veterans whose health has been adversely affected by the Persian Gulf War and to conduct all necessary tests to determine the causes of these illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, veterans of the Persian Gulf War be afforded the same rights and privileges guaranteed to all other veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to act in accordance with 38 USC, 1117, and develop, at the earliest possible date, appropriate definitions or diagnoses of the illnesses associated with service in the Persian Gulf; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Service and Veterans Affairs, and the Congress to fund appropriate research into the causes of these illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW continue to closely monitor this issue, identify and research problems, and urge appropriate corrective action to assist Persian Gulf War veterans and their families. (Approved)

No. 626 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE IN RETIRED PAY FOR SILVER STAR MEDAL RECIPIENTS

(Disapproved)

No. 627 (Submitted by Department of Kentucky)

AMEND TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY RETIREMENT FOR VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 628 (Submitted by Department of Wyoming)

PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR LVER & DVOP PROGRAMS

(Disapproved)

No. 629 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

REQUEST ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS OUT-PATIENT CLINIC IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

(Disapproved)

No. 630 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)

NORFOLK VETERANS HOME

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to allocate a total \$10.5 million in Federal contribution in FY-97 thereby allowing new construction to begin at the earliest date before any events occur that could lead to these veterans losing their home. (Approved)

No. 631 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

LIMIT THE RIGHT OF BURIAL IN A NATIONAL CEMETERY OF A
VETERAN CONVICTED OF A CAPITOL CRIME

(Disapproved)

No. 632 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

CHANGE SURPLUS APPROPRIATION RESCISSION ACT PL 79301

(Disapproved)

No. 633 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

RESTORE GRANT IN AID HOSPITAL PROGRAM TO THE FILIPINO
WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN THE PHILIPPINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the President and the Congress to restore the Grant In Aid Hospital Program under the management of the Manila Regional Office to assist in the medical treatment of surviving Philippine-based World War II veterans.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 634 (Submitted by Department of Maryland)

RETENTION OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE
HEALTH SCIENCES (USUHS)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States of America to guarantee continuation of USUHS in perpetuity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Veterans Affairs assign primary authority and responsibility for analysis of Persian Gulf War Syndrome to USUHS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Veterans Affairs expand USUHS resources to insure the aforementioned. (Approved)

No. 635 (Submitted by Departments of Idaho, Florida, Kentucky and Texas)

OPPOSE ABOLISHMENT OF VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
SERVICE

(Disapproved)

No. 636 (Submitted by Department of Alabama)

OBJECT TO THE ABOLISHMENT OF VETERANS
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

(Disapproved)

No. 637 (Submitted by Departments of Idaho, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Rhode Island)

VA TO PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE OF COST OF CARING FOR VETERANS
RESIDING IN STATE VETERANS HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we support VA per diem payments that equal 33.33% of the national average cost of providing care in a State Veterans Home; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress approves full funding of the State Veterans Home construction grant priority one projects for fiscal year 1998; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide medications, without charge, to veterans who are eligible for Aid and Attendance payments and are receiving nursing care and related medical services in a State Veterans Home, as authorized under Title 38, Section 1712 (d), United States Code, without jeopardizing or reducing VA per diem payments provided to said State Veterans Homes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President and Congress to pledge their full support to the State Veterans Home Program as it is the most cost-effective nursing care alternative used by VA. (Approved as Amended)

No. 638 (Submitted by Department of New Hampshire)

STATE VETERANS HOMES

(Disapproved)

No. 639 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

SAME DISABILITY RATING BY SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

(Disapproved)

No. 640 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

RETAIN EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS/DISABLED VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any such elimination of federal direction and control over the employment assistance entitlements earned by America's veterans/disabled veterans through their honorable service. (Approved as Amended)

No. 641 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

FUNDING OF NATIONAL VETERANS' TRAINING INSTITUTE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to support full funding of the National

Veterans' Training Institute as required by PL 100-232. (Approved)

No. 642 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT HR 414 MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEDICARE
ELIGIBLE MILITARY RETIREES

(Disapproved)

No. 643 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT HR 192 "UNIFORMED SERVICES MEDICARE SUBVENTION
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ACT"

(Disapproved)

No. 644 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT HR 167 "VETERANS TRAINING AND
EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1997"

(Disapproved)

No. 645 (Submitted by Department of California)

RECOGNIZE THE PERFORMANCE OF HONOR GUARD FUNCTIONS
BY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD
AT FUNERALS FOR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to recognize, as a Federal function, National Guard participation at veterans funerals. (Approved as Amended)

No. 646 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT HR 466 AND S. 211, THE "PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS
COMPENSATION ACT OF 1997" COMPANION BILLS

(Disapproved)

No. 647 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 335, COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S
VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 648 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT HR 76, AUTHORIZE MEDICARE ELIGIBLE MILITARY RETIREES
THE OPTION TO ENROLL IN THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

(Disapproved)

No. 649 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT S. 96 RECOGNIZING CERTAIN FILIPINO VETERANS WHO
PERFORMED MILITARY SERVICE WITH THE UNITED STATES ARMED
FORCES DURING WW II

(Disapproved)

No. 650 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 240 VETERANS PREFERENCE IN FEDERAL JOBS

(Disapproved)

No. 651 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT H.R. 1362, MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEDICARE
ELIGIBLE VETERANS A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
IN SELECTED VA HOSPITALS

(Disapproved)

No. 652 (Submitted by Department of California)

CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD APPOINTMENTS

(Disapproved)

No. 653 (Submitted by Department of California)

PRESERVATION OF THE NATIONAL SOLDIER HOME LOCATED AT THE
V.A. MEDICAL CENTER, WEST LOS ANGELES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the United States Congress to ensure adherence to the expressed wishes of the donors of said land, that the terms and consideration of the grant be adhered to, that the Pacific branch of the National

Soldiers' Home for Disabled Veterans be maintained on said property, that an opportunity be offered to those who were displaced from said National Soldiers' Home to return thereto and that the admission requirements for entering the home revert back to the original status. (Approved)

No. 654 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT TO MOVE VETERANS BACK TO THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF
U.S. CODE TITLE 38, CHAPTERS 41, 42 AND 43 OF VETERANS
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

(Disapproved)

No. 655 (Submitted by Department of California)

FUNDING FOR VA MEDICAL CENTER AT TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE

(Disapproved)

No. 656 (Submitted by Department of California)

SPECIAL HEALTH CARE FOR PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS
AND DEPENDENTS EXPOSED TO MYCOPLASMIC INFECTIONS

(Disapproved)

No. 657 (Submitted by Department of California)

RETENTION OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE
HEALTH SCIENCES (USUHS)

(Disapproved)

No. 658 (Submitted by Department of California)

NATURALIZATION PROCESS FOR FILIPINO VETERANS
OF WORLD WAR II

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation for the naturalization of World War II Filipino veterans. (Approved as Amended)

No. 659 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

RETAIN 15-DAY PAID MILITARY LEAVE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress not to enact any legislative change to the current law, PL 90-588, to reduce or eliminate the 15 days of fully paid “military leave” to federal civil servants who are also reservists or national guard members, when on active duty for training, or on active duty limited to a two week period each year. (Approved as Amended)

No. 660 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

OPPOSE THE INTEGRATION OF THE ST. CLOUD AND MINNEAPOLIS
DVA MEDICAL CENTERS

(Disapproved)

No. 661 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

EXEMPT ALL SERVICE- CONNECTED VETERANS FROM CO-PAYMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose charging 0% service-connected veterans co-payments for non-service connected medical care. (Approved as Amended)

No. 662 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

VFW OPPOSES SHORTCUTS TO AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

(Disapproved)

No. 663 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR VA BENEFICIARIES
AND MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide timely annual increases in an amount at least commensurate with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Department of Veterans Affairs’ beneficiaries and military retirees. (Approved)

No. 664 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN THE VETERANS’ PREFER-
ENCE ACT OF 1944 AND ALL SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we vigorously support enactment of legislation that strengthens

the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944 and all subsequent amendments.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 665 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS TO ALL
FEDERALLY FUNDED JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to pass legislation which will mandate priority of service for all eligible veterans to all federally funded job training programs. (Approved)

No. 666 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVED VA HOSPITAL FACILITIES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress provide funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) specifically for the purpose of improving the quality of hospital facilities and services available to women veterans at VA hospitals. (Approved)

No. 667 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SERVICE CONNECTION FOR THE RESIDUALS OF TOBACCO USE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record opposing any form of legislation which would prohibit service connection for the residuals of tobacco addiction when such is established under the same standard for service connection as in any other disability which may be incurred as a result of military service in the line of duty. (Approved)

No. 668 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT A STRONG VETERANS EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support a viable and effective VETS which has the maximum resources and capability to continue fully serving veterans into the next century. (Approved)

No. 669 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE IN RETIRED PAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we recommend the secretaries of the Armed Forces adopt a consistent policy that will allow the review of requests for the 10% increase in retired pay from enlisted military retirees who have been awarded the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Soldier's Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, the Airman's Medal or the Coast Guard Medal

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(Approved)

No. 670 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

SUPPORT LEGISLATION PROVIDING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS
AND SERVICES
TO VIETNAM VETERANS' CHILDREN WITH SPINA BIFIDA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the Agent Orange Benefits Act of 1996 to provide Vietnam veterans' children with spina bifida with comprehensive health care coverage, attendant services, independent living services, up to 48 months of educational assistance, adaptive housing and transportation assistance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Act be amended to include outreach and service coordination assistance to: (1) ensure that Vietnam veterans' children with spina bifida and their families are aware of their eligibility for VA benefits and services, and when needed, in fully accessing such benefits; (2) assist such children in protecting Supplemental Security Insurance and other federal and federally supported benefits and services from unwarranted reduction or termination due to the receipt of assistance under the Act; and (3) assist such children in accessing other specialized human services for persons with severe disabilities offered by federal, state, and local government agencies and other human services organizations.
(Approved)

No. 671 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DENY BURIAL IN FEDERAL FUNDED CEMETERIES TO INDIVIDUALS
CONVICTED OF FEDERAL CAPITAL CRIMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we support legislation to preclude burial in a federal funded cemetery for person guilty of first-degree murder of federal officials in conjunction with the commission of other federal crimes. (Approved)

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

Chairman: John M. Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, Florida
Vice Chairman: John S. Staum, Past Commander-in-Chief, Minnesota

(Ballroom G, Salt Palace Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Charles H. Ayers	6837
Alabama	Lester E. Kapelka	5850
Alaska	Leander P. Carr	9978
Arizona	George K. Mead	9400
Arkansas	Bobby G. Julian	6527
California	Hisashi Isosaki	8985
California	Buford L. Maples	5985
California	Richard R. Pignone	3173
California	Denis F. Wells	8327
Colorado	Mike Bokan	1771
Colorado	John R. Lewis	4051
Connecticut	Edward L. Burnham	1724
Connecticut	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
Connecticut	Robert A. Stevens	10690
Delaware	Paul R. Phillips, Jr	2863
Dist. of Col.	Benjamin F. Willis	9755
Europe	Richard A. Reed	10810
Florida	Raymond D. Brennan, Jr	10131
Florida	James W. Carlisle	10097
Florida	Niel R. Ramsdell	11146
Georgia	John F. Gwizdak	5080
Hawaii	Norbert K. Enos	2875
Illinois	Norman J. Busch	5915
Illinois	Eddie J. Griffith	1301
Illinois	George R. Lobb	3579
Indiana	James M. Leavitt	5782
Indiana	James J. Thiel	717
Iowa	Muriel E. Allan	3633
Iowa	Leslie G. Portwood	817
Kansas	Ronald W. Collins	1520
Kentucky	Alexander J. Feher	5171
Kentucky	Leroy Ford	5480
Latin Amer/Carib	Dannie Cooper	3822

Latin Amer/Carib	Marion H. Lasater	3876
Maine	Gerard T. Morin	9935
Maryland	John P. Matthews	6506
Massachusetts	Theodore R. Eaton	2104
Massachusetts	William J. Madera	C o A
Massachusetts	William L. Mc Carthy	864
Massachusetts	John T. Tynan	561
Michigan	Assad Allie	147
Michigan	William P. Bennett	7573
Minnesota	Michael D. Brainard	6587
Minnesota	Robert W. Reif	Surgeon General
Mississippi	Lowell E. Gibson	3806
Missouri	Paul E. Connors	30
Missouri	James R. Mueller	5077
Montana	William C. Mc Kinney	903
Nebraska	Billy C. Smith	7028
Nebraska	Dwaine D. Wilson	1652
Nevada	Walter J. Dybeck, Jr	10047
New Hampshire	John M. Packard	8546
New Jersey	John G. Mooney	711
New Jersey	Donald L. Scott	7247
New Mexico	Tyrone M. Benson	7686
New York	Daniel J. Dwyer	161
New York	Elton C. Klein	478
North Carolina	Johnnie M. Dyson	9881
North Dakota	Paul S. Aaberg	6139
Ohio	Lawrence Krugman, Jr	1079
Ohio	Daniel N. Long	1069
Ohio	Myron E. Young	9571
Oklahoma	Roderick V. Himber	4876
Oregon	Johnnie A. Baugh	1383
Pacific Areas	Thomas I. Elliott	9467
Pennsylvania	Thomas J. Dougherty	3474
Pennsylvania	Allen Q. Jones	21
Pennsylvania	Frank J. Zenzer	676
Rhode Island	John Sivo	2396
South Carolina	Johnnie C. Robinson	2889
South Dakota	Howard J. Hermanson	791
Tennessee	Joe A. Murphy, Jr	1289
Texas	Glen M. Gardner, Jr	3359
Texas	Buddi C. Harlan	4010
Texas	Robert J. Lyons	8246
Texas	John E. Mc Kelvey	9078
Texas	Earnest G. Mudd	8541
Texas	Ferrell E. Warden	C o A
Texas	William B. Warren	8564

Utah	Ernest T. Evans	2579
Vermont	Thomas H. Meehan	1332
Virginia	Charles B. Wilkerson	9808
Washington	Donald E. Bracken	2289
Washington	George F. Riedel, Jr	969
Washington	John Uram	10018
West Virginia	Scottie E. King	C o A
West Virginia	Eugene W. Walker	4484
Wisconsin	Bernard J. Boyle	2823
Wisconsin	William M. Klein	2112
Wisconsin	Edward F. Stockel	7896
Wisconsin	William J. Wenger	8216
Wyoming	Charles E. Fresorger	579

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Chairman: Ted C. Connell, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas
Vice Chairman: John W. Mahan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Montana

(Room 255A, Salt Palace Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Travis W. Ledbetter	3016
Alabama	Telfair J. Mashburn	3568
Alabama	Charles R. Stephens	Inspector General
Alaska	Robert S. Green	1685
Alaska	George A. Pikus	7056
Alaska	Joseph B. Sadlier	4352
Arizona	Gary N. Harlan	10188
Arizona	Vincent J. Mitchell	9972
Arizona	Vincent A. Rigo	2135
Arizona	William J. Silva	836
Arkansas	Bobby D. Hoggard	4517
Arkansas	Raymond J. Smorol	4513
Arkansas	Charles O. Wright	8347
California	Leonard W. Bartels	8547
California	Richard L. Eubank	85
California	Gerald A. Leffin	3868
California	Joseph F. Martin	9223
Colorado	Raymond L. Ammerman	3631
Colorado	James E. Mauck	2601
Colorado	Orlen L. Wolf	4171
Connecticut	Brian J. Kennedy	1523
Connecticut	Natt A. Mc Intire	1672
Connecticut	William B. Watson	3263

Delaware	William G. Schaen	475
Delaware	William W. Wailes	475
Dist. of Col.	Kenneth J. Allen, Jr	341
Europe	Harold Hedges	9334
Europe	Norman J. Hirschman	10658
Florida	Alex H. Damalas	10097
Florida	Ray L. Ford	10554
Florida	Ronald G. Lee	2473
Florida	Robert P. Loftus	4643
Georgia	Ray L. Christie	5080
Georgia	Robert K. Nelson	3200
Georgia	William J. Wilson	7007
Hawaii	Leonard W. Lover	94
Hawaii	James K. Woolsey	94
Idaho	Leonard L. Celmer	11065
Idaho	J P. Montgomery	3465
Illinois	John H. Buettner	6368
Illinois	Edward F. Jarnell, Jr	8081
Illinois	Tom Morgan	1592
Illinois	Russell H. Villwock	3579
Indiana	John L. Barnes	7119
Indiana	John L. Dahman	C o A
Indiana	David G. Havelly	5864
Indiana	Glendon R. Hinshaw	1111
Iowa	Patrick J. Shanahan	788
Iowa	James L. Shelton Jr	941
Kansas	Wayne M. Bushell	1714
Kansas	Elmer L. Holman	7521
Kansas	David W. Jones	56
Kansas	Burt Kiewert	7271
Kentucky	Roger L. Adams	10017
Kentucky	Jeff A. Phillips	1170
Latin Amer/Carib	James E. Cook	3822
Latin Amer/Carib	Walter F. Griggs	40
Louisiana	Stanley P. Breaux	3665
Louisiana	James B. Robertson	8107
Maine	Joseph L. Duguay	8835
Maine	Donald W. Linscott, Jr	1603
Maine	Peter F. Miesburger	9389
Maryland	John J. Gistedt	2678
Maryland	Thomas J. Hercek	467
Maryland	Robert L. Miedzinski	2632
Massachusetts	Antone G. Andrews	697
Massachusetts	Gordon L. Crosby	1526
Massachusetts	William J. Curran	1526
Massachusetts	Robert A. Malmberg	1526

Massachusetts	Louis J. Robicheau	507
Michigan	Cecil A. Mc Goon	2780
Michigan	Donald V. Nettler	9507
Michigan	Frank L. Skrumbellos	1008
Michigan	Jack C. Stevens	2358
Michigan	Barry F. Walter	4005
Minnesota	Daniel Bartholomew	3144
Minnesota	Harold Genrich	1222
Minnesota	Merlin O. Hanson	1639
Mississippi	James W. Austin	3036
Mississippi	Frederick T. Barnes	10024
Mississippi	Donald L. Verucchi	9573
Missouri	Maxie W. Bryant	35
Missouri	C C. Kapono	6278
Missouri	Samuel L. Smithson	4294
Missouri	Donald W. Watts	5553
Montana	Bruce J. Frye, Jr	3596
Montana	John M. Hoyt	3107
Nebraska	John L. Iossi	3704
Nebraska	George A. Lee	1652
Nebraska	John F. Olson	3704
Nebraska	Earl Stiner, Jr	3421
Nevada	Le Roy J. Heath	10047
Nevada	Gilbert R. Wagner	3848
New Hampshire	Michael S. Annis	2860
New Hampshire	Kevin P. Mc Keating, Jr	483
New Hampshire	Robert T. St Onge	8214
New Jersey	Carlbert Heard	2294
New Jersey	George J. Lisicki	C o A
New Jersey	Harry W. Morecroft	6061
New Jersey	John T. Sweeney	1302
New Mexico	Roland La France, Sr	10124
New Mexico	Robert O. Perea	2951
New Mexico	Frank J. Rivali	1793
New York	Vincent A. De Martino	5253
New York	James M. Longendyke	1386
North Carolina	Michael T. Burris	2615
North Carolina	William J. Hendren	2031
North Carolina	George E. Walker	7315
North Carolina	Raymond J. Yamrus	7318
North Dakota	Kent L. Anderson	9068
North Dakota	Robert L. Volk	1868
Ohio	Clifford E. Bauer	3360
Ohio	Robert C. Cockrell	1082
Ohio	Ronald C. Dohnal	4441
Ohio	James T. Hampton	1662

Ohio	Keith E. Harman	3035
Ohio	George W. Marks	C o A
Ohio	Shorty Wehr	5356
Oklahoma	Donald A. Firkins	9969
Oklahoma	Clemens Kozak	1199
Oregon	Charles D. Fuller	966
Oregon	James C. Hanley	1833
Oregon	Doyle E. Souders	2807
Pacific Areas	Paul T. Gasperson	9612
Pennsylvania	John Adamecz, Jr	245
Pennsylvania	Charles R. Feltenberger	2435
Pennsylvania	Donald J. Gobbel	33
Rhode Island	Benjamin Pezza	4651
Rhode Island	S Wolstencroft, Jr	8955
South Carolina	Melvin L. Emore	641
South Carolina	Frasier S. Wall	10420
South Dakota	William F. Cerny, Jr	C o A
South Dakota	Daryl L. Halling	3164
South Dakota	Fay J. Hendricks	6149
South Dakota	Alvin Pistorius	3342
South Dakota	Lorne F. Ruzicka	3312
Tennessee	William Berkley, Jr	1291
Tennessee	William A. Mc Nairy	4577
Tennessee	Roy C. Womble	5019
Texas	Michael F. Day	6386
Texas	Justo S. Guerra	4146
Texas	James C. Henderson, Jr	6796
Texas	David H. Slider	6441
Texas	Peter Stack	4344
Texas	Emmett A. Stelzer	6797
Texas	John Velasquez	4692
Utah	Roy S. Brown	8307
Utah	Gary L. Clark	C o A
Utah	Dennis L. Parizek	1481
Utah	Theodore B. Rimpau	1546
Vermont	Merritt A. Edwards	6689
Vermont	Ralph H. Elwell	1332
Virginia	James L. Booth	2216
Virginia	John L. Fanshaw, Jr	7819
Virginia	Phillip L. Hewitt	9808
Washington	Frank A. Kunz	6268
Washington	Charles T. O Donahue	10018
West Virginia	Billy E. Javins	8129
West Virginia	Foster E. Matthews	2523
West Virginia	Wesley J. Thomas	573
Wisconsin	Milo L. Cunningham	1318

Wisconsin	John A. Miller	9537
Wyoming	Harold E. Lowe	4343
Wyoming	Kenneth E. Weber	2918

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Wisconsin
Vice Chairman: Paul A. Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts
Vice Chairman: James R. Currieo, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona
Vice Chairman: R. D. Smith, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia

(Ballroom D, Salt Palace Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	William J. Burgess	6020
Alabama	Oliver W. Dial	C o A
Alabama	Jack F. Ivy	2702
Alaska	Robert R. Klotz	9785
Alaska	John W. Minnick	9365
Alaska	Jack S. O Neal	9569
Alaska	William Timmons	9978
Arizona	John I. Halstead, Sr	3632
Arizona	Donald E. Maynard	7968
Arizona	Lawrence E. Reinhardt	9972
Arkansas	Martin O. Cowley	2259
Arkansas	B J. Garrett	8124
Arkansas	Clarence L. Moore	5742
Arkansas	William D. Taylor	7769
California	Gerald D. Anderson	2835
California	Benjamin Berroteran	4696
California	Robert S. Hockenhull	2337
California	Lyman L. Indermuehle	8547
California	Steven D. Jacobs	5944
California	Cornelius P. O Connor	2967
California	Guilio P. Santa Maria	2835
California	Jerald E. Thomas	9657
Colorado	Theodore G. Argys	3820
Colorado	Phillip Garcia	7945
Colorado	Ronald J. Lattin	2461
Colorado	Arthur F. Ledesma	3971
Connecticut	Edward S. Banas	10004
Connecticut	Francis C. Brought	10201
Connecticut	Andrew F. Flanagan	10219
Connecticut	Rodman M. Fulton	9965
Connecticut	Laurence Pitcher	6933
Delaware	Albert J. Imperial, Jr	7447

Delaware	Walter J. Kula	3257
Delaware	Charles E. Price	3792
Dist. of Col.	John P. Breen	2979
Dist. of Col.	Walter H. Brown	9755
Dist. of Col.	Albert O. Burke	7358
Europe	George W. Eby	10692
Europe	Phillip F. Gatchell	9845
Florida	Lester W. Davis	10093
Florida	John F. Key, III	7256
Florida	Eugene R. Manfrey	C o A
Florida	Robert A. Mc Dade	9236
Georgia	Robert E. Bates	5376
Georgia	Ray E. Brooks	2785
Georgia	Dan Bullard, III	658
Georgia	Donald F. Ziegler	6447
Hawaii	Roy K. Machado	3027
Hawaii	Aloysius Spenser, Jr	3850
Idaho	Thomas E. Monson	63
Idaho	Robert A. Wayment	10328
Illinois	Joseph L. Berg	5691
Illinois	Willard Livingston	1308
Illinois	Robert J. Mc Mahon	2298
Illinois	Vincent J. Medina	5149
Illinois	William R. Moran	2240
Illinois	Ralph C. Wieter	805
Illinois	Robert P. Witcher	7980
Indiana	Roger E. Baker	6841
Indiana	David R. Cole	1832
Indiana	R L. Johanningsmeier	1257
Indiana	Richard L. Jordan	2067
Indiana	Audie W. Rainbolt	1693
Indiana	Dwight O. Smith	6904
Indiana	Earl S. Walton	360
Iowa	Cecil A. Buschbom	839
Iowa	Roger D. Schwieso	941
Iowa	Daryl R. Shinker	2349
Kansas	James F. Graham	2715
Kansas	Richard A. Hill	7437
Kansas	Robert F. Petterson	6242
Kansas	Beul B. Ross	1650
Kansas	Mckinley Smith	8773
Kentucky	William J. Apple	1170
Kentucky	Thomas I. Blain	5421
Kentucky	Ronald M. Myers	1096
Latin Amer/Carib	G A. Crowther	15039
Latin Amer/Carib	Clifford P. England	3822

Latin Amer/Carib	Edward R. Lesesne	100
Louisiana	Ernest W. Bryant	7286
Louisiana	Jack Coursey	5951
Louisiana	Richard J. Fruge	5153
Louisiana	Joseph Guidry, Sr	3121
Maine	Thomas D. Andrus	9429
Maine	Philip M. Farrell	11299
Maine	Raymond R. Lupo	1761
Maine	Arthur J. Roy	C o A
Maine	Alan M. Winter	9150
Maryland	Nicholas T. Bassetti	9083
Maryland	Raymond J. Boyle	6027
Maryland	Kenneth L. Britter	9862
Maryland	Clayton A. Deaver	1858
Maryland	Kenneth F. Perry, Sr	6027
Maryland	Clinton Townsend	3626
Maryland	Lawson E. Van Ormer	6027
Massachusetts	Walter G. Gansenberg	834
Massachusetts	Eugene F. Hakala	1812
Massachusetts	Michael J. Imbrascio	639
Massachusetts	Arthur D. Lettiere	1272
Massachusetts	Arnold W. Paterson	8608
Massachusetts	William T. Rehm	722
Massachusetts	Cornelius F. Sharron	9566
Michigan	James M. Galen	6802
Michigan	Richard E. La Fave	5670
Michigan	Richard L. Lehner	1735
Michigan	Raymond G. O'Neill	147
Minnesota	Patrick T. Bohmer	246
Minnesota	Calvin D. Ferber	612
Minnesota	Francis J. Ginther	210
Minnesota	Gordon W. Kirk	C o A
Minnesota	Ted B. Theodorsen	6320
Mississippi	Jerry W. Beaird	3806
Mississippi	James E. Gordon	4100
Mississippi	Bobby G. Sanders	10734
Mississippi	J H. Smith	1983
Missouri	Charles A. Brewster	5553
Missouri	Ralph H. Fiehler	4219
Missouri	James F. Harrelson	4539
Missouri	Melvin L. Page, Sr	2069
Missouri	Clarence W. Reed	6337
Missouri	Calvin C. Vogelsang	3838
Montana	Francis E. Croucher	1125
Montana	Duane R. Johnson	4099

Montana	Erich J. Maki	4198
Montana	Jean A. Nesheim	4925
Montana	Robert T. Schweigel	6786
Nebraska	Jack L. Armagost	C o A
Nebraska	Allan D. Diederich	8334
Nebraska	Eugene L. Kuhn	3704
Nebraska	Arnold L. Miller	2280
Nebraska	James J. Pacas	4836
Nebraska	Walter J. Witt	2243
Nevada	Sherwin F. Cihlar	10047
Nevada	Jon S. Grubbs	8250
Nevada	Daryl L. Mobley	3630
Nevada	Odis Ward	10047
New Hampshire	Frank E. Casey, Jr	816
New Hampshire	John M. Lilly	1698
New Hampshire	Robert W. Madigan	483
New Hampshire	Steven R. Rousseau	8214
New Jersey	Joseph T. Del Grippo	335
New Jersey	Joseph G. Menza	493
New Jersey	Greg Policastro	493
New Jersey	John D. Reed, Sr	7859
New Jersey	Adam J. Rosinski	4699
New Jersey	George T. Van Allen	7504
New Jersey	Donna L. Wertz	6590
New Mexico	Earl C. Earnest	8703
New Mexico	Joe F. Ford	401
New Mexico	Lawrence R. Frappier	3015
New Mexico	Joe D. Salas	401
New York	Anthony M. Ferrarese	16
New York	Robert A. Seagrave	2940
New York	Vincent J. Siesta	546
New York	Jack I. Simons	9217
New York	Roy Spanower	5558
New York	Harry C. Wurth	5253
North Carolina	Arthur W. Eller	1142
North Carolina	Charles E. English	2573
North Carolina	Harlan C. La Bar	2057
North Carolina	Betty H. Rowland	9100
North Dakota	Harry Renschler	1326
North Dakota	Kasimir Schmaltz	6831
Ohio	James Comedy	3383
Ohio	John M. Griffin	6772
Ohio	Frank Hofstetter, Jr	2947
Ohio	James M. Miller	451
Ohio	Gerald J. Ward	5713
Ohio	John D. Whirrett	3521

Oklahoma	Doss E. Baker	8580
Oklahoma	Howard W. Driskill	2745
Oklahoma	Eugene H. George	9969
Oklahoma	David L. Turpin	10282
Oregon	Harold E. Goin	2468
Oregon	Ronald A. Harlan	661
Oregon	Samuel F. Jeffers	3970
Oregon	Merlin K. Pepion	3440
Pacific Areas	E R. Milward	2485
Pennsylvania	Glenn C. Dashner	464
Pennsylvania	John De Dominicis	764
Pennsylvania	Walter K. Debes	20
Pennsylvania	Neale H. Deibler	6493
Pennsylvania	John M. Gunn, Sr	2506
Pennsylvania	Gary L. Moon	631
Pennsylvania	Ronald G. Tyler, Sr	1462
Rhode Island	John J. Barone	8955
Rhode Island	Henry H. Kramer	329
Rhode Island	Anthony J. Scudieri	10011
South Carolina	Bobby K. Bryant	9539
South Carolina	Eugene Moore	641
South Carolina	Robert A. Olsen	3433
South Carolina	Vernon D. Shumaker	641
South Dakota	Delane E. Fickbohm	6149
South Dakota	James E. Fortin	750
South Dakota	Kenneth Jorgenson	750
South Dakota	Walter F. Joynt	1273
South Dakota	Larry L. Scudder	1273
Tennessee	Ronald N. Cameron	11160
Tennessee	Otha M J. Kerr	5266
Tennessee	John H. Scott	4848
Tennessee	W C. Swink	4798
Texas	Charles L. Cannon, Jr	5076
Texas	Anthony J. Emmite	6378
Texas	Anthony W. Graf	1815
Texas	Clifford W. Kinson	9299
Texas	Robert G. Parrott, Jr	8790
Texas	George B. Sparkman	9181
Texas	Robert W. Speake	1922
Texas	Lavern H. Terbl	9168
Texas	Alexander Vernon	9191
Utah	Duane Hall	5560
Utah	Thomas M. Kennedy	3586
Utah	Melvin T. Richeson	7442
Vermont	W T. Myette	9653
Vermont	Richard M. Partington	5125

Vermont	John J. Zuba	1034
Virginia	Ernest B. Glynn	7327
Virginia	Lawrence F. Mattera	5500
Virginia	Paul T. Moore	4491
Virginia	Clifford F. Williford	3160
Washington	Charlie H. Adamson, Jr	2289
Washington	Clayton R. Hoffman	2329
Washington	Richard A. Petersen	10018
Washington	Darrell M. Pilat	1263
West Virginia	Robert A. Jackson	6450
West Virginia	Robert B. Kesling	573
West Virginia	John Oliverio	629
West Virginia	A A. Spagnuolo	573
Wisconsin	George Pfielsticker	305
Wisconsin	Joel P. Walker	1904
Wyoming	Richard F. Ament	6125
Wyoming	Herb J. Carstens	579
Wyoming	David Ferris	10375
Wyoming	Pete Quinnell	7756

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: Clifford G. Olson, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief,
Massachusetts

Vice Chairman: Cooper T. Holt, Past Commander-in-Chief, Tennessee
(Ballroom F, Salt Palace Convention Center)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

Chairman: Billy Ray Cameron, Past Commander-in-Chief, North Carolina

Vice Chairman: George R. Cramer, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Gerald S. Brock	2702
Alabama	Benjamin R. Minshev	49
Alaska	John P. Guinn	10041
Alaska	Harvey A. Johnson	9569
Arizona	George T. Diehl, Sr	3715
Arizona	Roland J. Fuerst	9972
Arizona	Dennis E. Kane	3632
Arizona	John M. Knowles	2364
Arkansas	Harold N. Harris	2952
Arkansas	Carthel B. Parrott	3543
California	Robert C. Marr	7283
California	Gene B. Patrick	7283
California	Kenneth L. Stevens	9223
California	Harry H. Tanabe	9879
Colorado	George R. Gore	4265

Colorado	George H. Palmateer	4171
Colorado	John H. Sentena	4051
Colorado	Harland E. Smith	1781
Connecticut	Thomas C. Deere	6726
Connecticut	Benjamin T. Lord, Jr	5095
Connecticut	William H. Woodbury	1724
Delaware	Edwin Moran	7447
Dist. of Col.	Philip L. Buchanan	4332
Dist. of Col.	Lynn R. Hill	7284
Europe	Sidney L. Jenkins	10436
Europe	Dean A. White	27
Florida	Richard Fitzgerald	7721
Florida	Normand R. Gaouette	8681
Florida	Elijah L. Summerfield	6180
Georgia	William R. Johnson	658
Georgia	Leonard D. Ott	6330
Georgia	Johnnie M. Shiver	4830
Hawaii	Jesus Lagueras	10850
Hawaii	Donald J. Raven	2432
Idaho	Randall E. Russell	2136
Idaho	Henry P. Vanderhoef	10444
Illinois	Daniel F. Campus	367
Illinois	John W. Johnston	7190
Illinois	Maurice H. Kerckhove	2153
Indiana	Leo W. Farnsley, III	3281
Indiana	Jerell O. Herston	5864
Indiana	George A. Magurany	802
Iowa	Larry J. Bender	788
Iowa	Robert S. Randall	839
Kansas	Richard G. Clutts	7271
Kansas	Lewie B. Cooper	1174
Kansas	Larry D. Dalton	1654
Kansas	Larry G. Graham	7521
Kansas	Denny L. Lawson	1186
Kentucky	Robert E. Colasanti	10281
Kentucky	Emmett C. Johnson	5662
Kentucky	Francis L. Wimsatt	5421
Latin Amer/Carib	Thomas L. Hobbs	6565
Latin Amer/Carib	Aurora G. Toth	100
Louisiana	Floyd J. Landeche	3665
Louisiana	William M. Procter	1736
Louisiana	James E. Westbrook	3784
Louisiana	J N. Young	8971
Maine	Rosemarie Lane	9459
Maine	Myron H. Pierce	9787
Maine	Erlon B. Rose	3335

Maryland	Elwood S. Knight, Jr	7937
Maryland	Alfred N. Simmons	8509
Massachusetts	Roland F. Durrell	1272
Massachusetts	John F. Leonard	639
Massachusetts	Edward W. Parks	2188
Massachusetts	Ronald A. Patalano	529
Massachusetts	Norman P. Richard	6538
Massachusetts	Tyler Thomas	144
Michigan	Dale Brubaker, Jr	3941
Michigan	Wayne A. Buck	C o A
Michigan	James N. Goldsmith	4139
Michigan	Eric L. Halvorsen	5065
Michigan	John J. Harrow, Jr	3724
Michigan	Patrick H. Patterson	6756
Minnesota	Joe J. Mach	210
Minnesota	James D. Vetter	4020
Minnesota	Frank J. Volk	2717
Minnesota	Larry G. Ziebarth	6843
Mississippi	Albert O. Cummings	4272
Mississippi	Paul R. Sims	4488
Missouri	Jack P. Adams	3404
Missouri	Glenn E. Davis	4294
Missouri	Eugene L. Hoeltge	5077
Montana	Earl E. Chase	C o A
Montana	Donald C. Enquist	1087
Montana	Charles C. Mc Cahon	1755
Montana	Wade S. Smith	3831
Nebraska	Kenneth R. Collins	7029
Nebraska	John R. Liebsack	2503
Nevada	Bernard J. Juran, III	3819
Nevada	Michael H. Musgrove	2350
New Hampshire	Donald R. Caron	7015
New Hampshire	Jerry A. Parenti	8546
New Jersey	Richard C. Bradshaw	4589
New Jersey	Fredrick Di Pietro	8840
New Jersey	Donald E. Marshall, Jr	9503
New Jersey	Joseph E. Scott, Jr	1333
New Mexico	Felix J. Coca	2951
New Mexico	William E. Festing, Jr	3277
New York	Robert E. Barnhart	686
New York	T W. Bossidy	7466
New York	Frank P. Cappa	455
New York	Arthur E. Koch, III	6780
New York	Samuel C. Pilato	307
North Carolina	Alvin F. Edwards	5352
North Carolina	Steve M. Jones	9337

North Carolina	A G. Parker	8719
North Dakota	Joseph Shoman	7564
Ohio	Russell D. Doan	5108
Ohio	George M. Rinkowski	5530
Ohio	Terry A. Roan	3124
Ohio	Joseph P. Seibert	6428
Oklahoma	Orville Lettkeman	4465
Oklahoma	Anna M. Love	3649
Oregon	Raymond K. Buhrmaster	2807
Oregon	Alfred L. Foust	4273
Oregon	Raymond Kennedy	3473
Pacific Areas	Richard A. Keeley	9612
Pennsylvania	William C. Allen	7213
Pennsylvania	John A. Biedrzycki	418
Pennsylvania	Michael J. Bullister, Jr	456
Pennsylvania	Donald A. Lehman	8298
Pennsylvania	Almon J. Long	C o A
Pennsylvania	Anthony J. Longo	5205
Pennsylvania	Norman F. Rettig, Jr	249
Rhode Island	Armondo C. Azzinaro	C o A
Rhode Island	Ernest P. Degrave	2274
Rhode Island	Joseph F. Maiorano	4651
South Carolina	William J. Jolin	6087
South Carolina	Bill E. Lark	Chief of Staff
South Carolina	John D. Patty	9539
South Carolina	George M. Pullie	C o A
South Dakota	Ordean A. Amundsen	3061
South Dakota	Rick W. Barg	628
South Dakota	Stanley E. Seymour	5860
Tennessee	Bobby C. Collins	1990
Tennessee	Eldrie Duff	4728
Texas	Doyle D. Dey	8967
Texas	Gustavo Gomez	6388
Texas	Edward J. Krenek	8787
Texas	William B. Moody	2034
Texas	Charles S. Pearson	1533
Texas	Chuck E. Sinclair	8905
Texas	Paul L. Smith	3990
Utah	Frank A. Montella	10745
Utah	Virgil E. Rieske	4918
Vermont	Robert E. Dean	2571
Vermont	Larry W. Sweeney	9653
Virginia	George E. Mc Cracken	609
Virginia	Kenneth A. Ward	7327
Washington	John E. Bradburn	7089
Washington	James W. King, Jr	3067

Washington	Chester F. Shenkel	2329
West Virginia	Gail L. Harper	3466
West Virginia	Leonard L. Miller	2102
West Virginia	Alfred W. Zelinsky	4595
Wisconsin	Roy J. Friedel	1904
Wisconsin	Matthias Mayer, Jr	6498
Wisconsin	Curtis J. Taylor, Jr	1318
Wyoming	John J. Rudell, Jr	9439
Wyoming	Gary P. Shinneman	4343

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Chairman: Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona

Vice Chairman: Norman G. Staab, Past Commander-in-Chief, Kansas

(Room 151G. Salt Palace Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Peter Frauenhoffer	5658
Alaska	Gerald J. Dorsher	5559
Alaska	Gary L. Kurpius	10221
Arizona	Lyman F. Chapman	1760
Arizona	Richard T. Fulmer	9401
Arizona	Billie E. Stuart	549
Arkansas	Melvin F. Baines	1316
Arkansas	James E. Ford, Jr	3031
Arkansas	Gareth P. Mc Natt	3031
Arkansas	Leslie F. Thone	3141
California	Paul T. Bannai	1961
California	Fred J. Birdsell	7907
California	Leonard R. Herrst	Judge Advocate General
California	Hughes P. Rue	9657
California	Raymond C. Sisk	C o A
California	Philemon J. Velasquez	5059
California	Jerry A. Williams	7636
California	Leondas V. Wright, Sr	4647
Colorado	Darrell D. Elliott	1771
Colorado	Wayne J. Thompson, Jr	5061
Colorado	Warren E. Wellensiek	4171
Connecticut	Ronald Christopher	5095
Connecticut	Glenn N. Tewksbury	10362
Connecticut	Scott Vanderheyden	6933
Delaware	Clarence Burris, Jr	8801
Delaware	Benjamin Pernol, Jr	3792
Dist. of Col.	Remigio A. Cabacar	5471
Dist. of Col.	David F. Wood	1085

Europe	Peter J. Mascetti	10658
Europe	Bruce A. Withers	C o A
Florida	Clifford J. Carter	6827
Florida	James De Pass	10068
Georgia	Richard Branson	5080
Georgia	Sammy L. Cates	5290
Georgia	William E. Patterson	4346
Hawaii	Frederick A. Wong	8616
Idaho	Donald G. Riegel	889
Idaho	William P. Shaw	11065
Illinois	Rick Frank	1461
Illinois	Walter C. Luksta	9115
Illinois	Terry L. Mc Kinney	886
Illinois	Russell R. Rieke	5694
Illinois	Edward A. Trennert	2255
Indiana	Everett D. Foreman	5864
Indiana	William N. Hedge	5782
Indiana	Robert L. Jenkins	6919
Indiana	Michael V. Smith	2999
Indiana	James D. Voelker	1114
Iowa	Dowd J. Brandt	9662
Iowa	Clinton L. Hoferman	6172
Iowa	William P. Shannon	733
Kansas	Jefferson D. Lawson	6654
Kansas	Tom G. Sanko	1714
Kansas	Roy V. Williams	8773
Kentucky	William R. Coffey	5421
Kentucky	William P. Marcum, Jr	2921
Latin Amer/Carib	Ruth D. Thomas	3835
Louisiana	Wilferd L. Johnson	2130
Louisiana	Eugene J. Louque	5852
Maine	Joseph H. Gallant, Jr	832
Maine	Timothy P. Getz	3335
Maine	Donald R. Libby, Jr	832
Maryland	William E. Berry	6694
Maryland	Joseph F. Rosetta	9619
Massachusetts	James J. Busa	1272
Massachusetts	Joseph E. Caouette	1105
Massachusetts	Gardner Mc Williams	2425
Massachusetts	Anthony B. Piscopo	529
Massachusetts	William J. Riley	864
Massachusetts	Robert M. Van Kirk	2394
Michigan	Daniel J. Crocker	796
Michigan	Walter L. Gooden	2645
Michigan	Edmund R. Gucwa	6896
Michigan	Martin M. Mieras, Jr	3023

Minnesota	David L. Adams	1782
Minnesota	Thomas L. Hanson	1639
Minnesota	Richard A. Zierdt	6587
Mississippi	Lester J. Dreesen	5573
Mississippi	Cleo D. Dunhurst	6285
Mississippi	Thomas A. Williams	9573
Missouri	Dennis F. Flynn	2866
Missouri	Clifford E. Johnson	479
Missouri	Paul G. Jones	2866
Missouri	William D. Merideth	5366
Montana	James J. Bertrand	1579
Montana	Edmond G. Frazer	2484
Nebraska	John W. De Camp	131
Nebraska	Lewis A. Fittje	8334
Nebraska	Anthony J. Gallardo	131
Nevada	Frank A. Hoke	3726
Nevada	Albert J. Mc Mindes	10047
Nevada	Frank R. Risewick	10047
New Hampshire	Robert L. Mc Dermott	1631
New Hampshire	Reginald R. Wright	8942
New Jersey	Samuel J. Bardach	132
New Jersey	William A. Goode	809
New Jersey	John M. Kirwan	8867
New Jersey	John G. Mooney	711
New Mexico	Michael L. Alford	3271
New Mexico	Manuel G. Evaro	4384
New Mexico	James H. Ferguson	C o A
New York	Ralph U. De Marco	C o A
New York	Melvin Garrett	6396
New York	William E. Mc Garr	6196
New York	Karl R. Rohde	1374
New York	Harold C. Steiger	161
North Carolina	Amon F. Harris	6018
North Carolina	Cecil E. Sanders	891
North Carolina	James O. Ward	3074
North Dakota	Reynold L. Buchholz	6831
North Dakota	Robert G. Rudd	7564
Ohio	Gary B. Bentfeld	2799
Ohio	Clifford M. Christensen	7340
Ohio	George M. Householder	2595
Ohio	John R. Johnson	8850
Ohio	John Mc Donald	451
Ohio	Gerald E. Mc Millen	8586
Oklahoma	Charles R. Horne	9969
Oklahoma	James H. Mitchell	3916
Oregon	Robert L. George	3973

Oregon	Edwin L. Williams	10644
Pacific Areas	Kenneth W. Schaefer	2485
Pennsylvania	Carmen A. De Santi	129
Pennsylvania	Robert E. Durovey	7842
Pennsylvania	Anthony Filardi	1394
Pennsylvania	George W. Mullen	4480
Pennsylvania	Joseph M. Salvo	5267
Rhode Island	John A. Bucci	10011
Rhode Island	Pasco A. De Palo	329
South Carolina	Frazer S. Hammarlund	10420
South Carolina	Teofilo Rivas	641
South Dakota	Darrell K. Foell	3342
South Dakota	William A. Hollmann	7319
South Dakota	Earl R. Schultz	17
Tennessee	Larry L. Dalton	1289
Tennessee	Ramsey P. Locke	5066
Tennessee	David H. Wilson	4848
Texas	C W. Buchanan	3892
Texas	R E. Lord	10351
Texas	Manuel O. Rivas	8782
Utah	Sanford Rosenthal	3586
Vermont	Denis B. Backus	2571
Vermont	Bradley F. Reynolds	798
Virginia	John E. Saunders	4809
Virginia	Rodney L. Smith	176
Virginia	Ralph D. Stephens	392
Washington	George C. Berthiaume	969
Washington	Dennis J. Greenwalt	11446
Washington	Charles E. Vitiritti, Jr	9430
West Virginia	James M. Burkhart	1212
West Virginia	Eugene E. Patrick	3856
Wisconsin	Ralph O. Heese	1691
Wisconsin	Arthur H. Schultz	305
Wisconsin	James R. Weber	2260
Wisconsin	Bruce E. Wiese	8057
Wyoming	A L. Ellefson	7756
Wyoming	William H. Saunders	579

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Chairman: Richard Trombla, Post 1174, Kansas

Department	Name	Post No.
California	Edwin L. Myers	9814
Delaware	Elwood B. Rickards	7234
Illinois	James L. Mascola	3580

Minnesota	James H. Kennedy	3877
Missouri	James H. Willis	534

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Vice Chairman: James L. Kimery, Past Commander-in-Chief, New Mexico
Vice Chairman: Ray R. Soden, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois

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